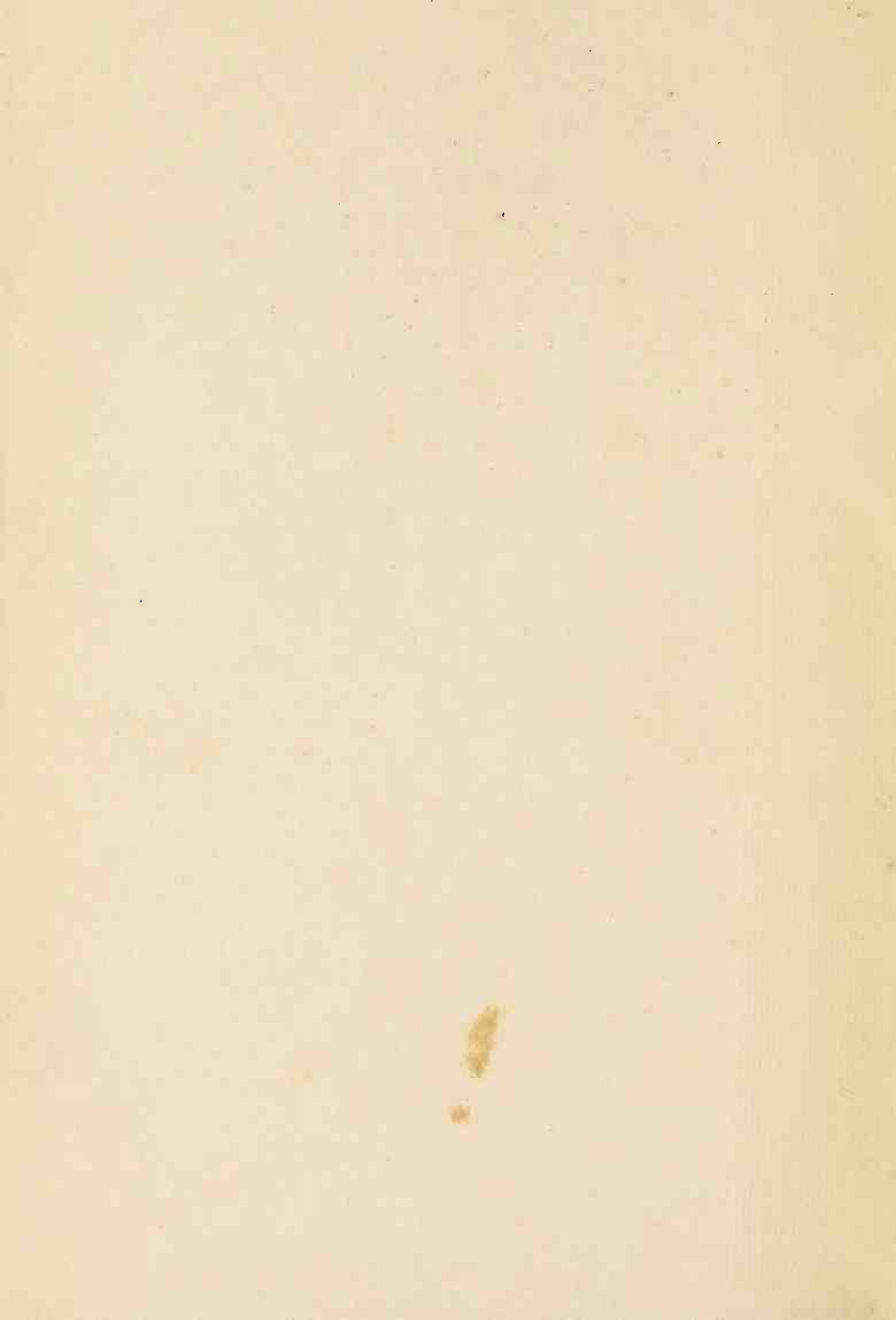


*The*  
**DESTROYER**

**DRINK**

A TRUE STORY



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JOHN WATSON

# THE DESTROYER

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MAN TO DEMON

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The Devastation of a Life

BY

STRONG DRINK

---

By HENRY KNOTT

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"The blood had been wiped away, the brass rail cleaned and polished, and the feet of men rested upon the spot where a life had been crushed out, while they still drank the poison that had killed a man, broken two hearts, destroyed a soul and made a mockery of life."

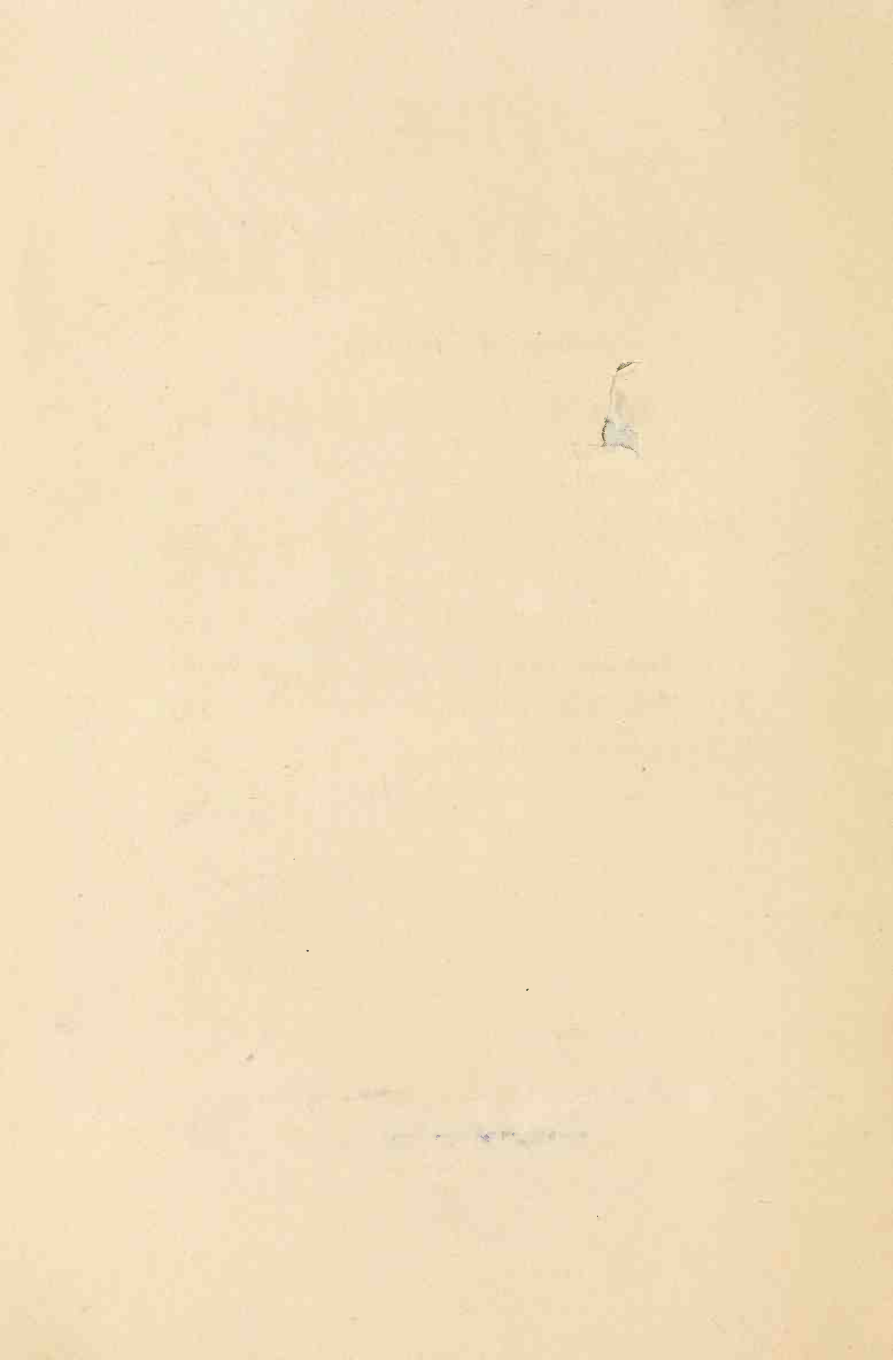
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## INTRODUCTION.

John Watson had been a prosperous man. All his friends and neighbors admitted that. For twenty-two years he had lived in the same house in a suburb of a large city, had watched prosperity all around him, had shared in a modest degree that worldly success which comes to the citizen who grows up with the town and partakes of the general welfare, so to speak.

Years before he had bought, by yearly savings, a modest home and married a girl who was as thrifty as himself. While not rich he had saved quite a tidy sum against the proverbial "rainy day" and now, this winter evening, he sat thinking over the past, his heart content, with no regrets to worry and the future promising all that a man who had done his duty could reasonably expect.

John Watson was a plain man, who belonged to the great majority that forms the backbone of all that stands for public and private purity. As a young man he had joined the church and been circumspect in his coming and going. The son of poor parents he had made his way in the world without help. A common-school education was the only groundwork on which was built his ideas of business and politics. When he left school the firm of M. & Co. engaged him, and by punctuality and neatness he had risen to the head of the large force of men and boys in their shipping department.

In all relations with his fellowmen he was respected and in many instances admired, for there are certain qualities in human nature that compel respect, even from those who lack them.

Mrs. Watson was a model wife. Twenty-four years of married life, with the cares

which every mother experiences who is true to the duties of the home, had not marred her naturally sweet disposition. She had married John Watson because she loved him and shared everything that came into his life. When first they started house-keeping her weekly allowance was very small, but with prudent economy there was always a little sum safely stowed away, as she said, for her children's education.

Her first child died in infancy and the young husband and wife learned early the meaning of sorrow, which only drew them into closer bonds of affection and deepened their love. Then came a boy, who delighted their hearts and upon whom was lavished all the treasures of motherhood. His father worshipped him and many a goodly plan was formed for his future. It was a red letter day in their lives when the minister came and christened him John.

When young John had seen two sum-

mers another child graced their home, a little girl, whose eyes were as blue as the summer sky, eyes like her mother's, that seemed to fill the house with sunlight and bring heaven very close to earth.

In thankfulness they praised God for His blessings. One more sorrow was added to their lives when another little messenger came, opened his eyes and went quickly away, as if this earth were a poor place for a little child to live in.

Their little boy John and girl, whom they called Ethel, were now grown up and gave promise of useful and good lives. Ethel had graduated from the high school and being musical, had decided to advance her studies in that direction. Already she had won a scholarship in a conservatory which justly made her father and mother very proud.

John who was of age had passed through school and then graduated from a small



college. He had always been more or less a mechanic and when quite a lad had made a little model motor, so we do not wonder that electrical engineering claimed his attention at college and all his studies formulated to his ambition which now was in a fair way of being realized.

A large concern engaged him as a draftsman in their construction department and already he had won their praise by improving one of their standard designs, so before him stretched the path of success and life was full of the lure of achievement and honor.

John Watson, Jr., possessed many of his father's sterling qualities of character. Having had more advantages, his experience accounted for the usual life of the clean cut college boy who, while not adverse to having a good time could look back over the years spent away from home without any regrets.

Once a week he had written home and his letters were all cherished by his mother and affectionately regarded by her as tokens of her boy's love, every line read and re-read until she knew them by heart, and when in his modest, straightforward way he had recounted the history of some temptation—the refusal to drink a glass of beer because he had promised his mother never to touch strong drink, her eyes filled with tears of joy that God had blessed her with such a son, who, before the tempter had stood strong enough to withstand the laughter of companions and their jokes.

Great was her pride when she and her husband at the commencement exercises had seen their boy take his degree, and many a night they had caught each other instinctively looking at it, as it hung upon the wall of the sitting-room, the most prized article in their home; thus, with two talented children, a fair competence, good

health and no worries it was no wonder they were content with life, appreciating the blessings of the past and waiting confidently for the future, strong in faith that those who lived as true as they knew how to the moral laws of God would unquestionably be taken under the care of divine love, both here and hereafter when the flesh should give up the soul in death.

But, dear reader, you shall see in the following chapters that there is one great enemy of all men and women embodying powers of destruction to soul and body which can bring the strongest down unto the dust of degradation and shame; which can pollute the fairest home with crime, blighting hopes and blasting honorable names with the history of evils worse than death. An enemy who has destroyed an untold army of men and women, who still wages war against the strongest as well as with weak women and little children, blight-

ing youth and age alike, passing like a pestilence over a fair world, leaving misery and ruin wherever man succumbs to its cunning and its power—so mighty, that the whole world is marshalling its force against it, because brought to bay in a struggle involving all that life and love, manhood and womanhood hold most dear: a struggle with the supreme might of Hell—Strong Drink.



## CHAPTER I.

### The First Glass.

In the same office with John Watson, Jr., there was a young man of totally different character. George Morrison had lacked the early influence which always shows itself later in life by certain traits, attitudes toward right and wrong which, to say the least, always finds some ground of self excuse when conflicting with conscience.

George was not a bad boy in the sense that anything vicious tainted his heart and mind, but he possessed weaknesses that unrestrained lead to more serious habits. Many a time his morning appearance gave rise to questionings from his friends. The tired eyes with their deep lines and dark shadings, the general listlessness and de-

pression which told the tale of late hours and intemperate doings, the furtive watching of the clock for the respite from work, and then the hurry for the customary "drink"—all this marked him as a young man with a tendency toward the lower, the broad path to a condition so prevalent that it is unnoticed in the trend of daily life.

George had another side to his character. When normal, he was a bright companion, and what is called "popular" with all who came in contact with him, especially with the young women whom he knew and called upon.

In the office he was generally liked, and his employers thought well of him, for any deficiencies that marred his business relations were overlooked through his cleverness and ability to rise to those occasions for extra work which is often needed from the employees in large corporations.

Despite a difference in their personali-

ties, when viewed from the outside, there was something about George Morrison that appealed to John Watson.

One will often casually be surprised at friendships between men who appear to be differently constituted in character and interests, but which on closer acquaintance are seen to possess temperaments that find much in common. These young men were no exception to this. Morrison was two years older than John and when the latter first came to the office he had shown him those little courtesies which do much to make a stranger feel at home when surrounded by conditions that are strange to the newcomer in business. John had never forgotten these attentions and consequently overlooked many of the little "breaks" he knew his friend made. While they never were what one might call chums, yet, on several occasions they had spent the evening together calling on young lady ac-

quaintances and at other times going to an occasional dance or attending the theater.

While in John's company Morrison had never even asked him to have a friendly drink or done anything to prejudice his opinion of him as a decent fellow, despite the knowledge that occasionally he had a "good time" with the ordinary "good times" revelry.

One morning in early spring Morrison came over to John's desk and said, "Are you going to the Mitchell dance tonight?"

"I had forgotten all about it and am glad you reminded me. Yes, I will go with you and will immediately telephone Lucy Powers and see if she will accompany me."

John talked with the young lady, whom he had taken out several times before, and she, being willing, the two friends fixed up their evening entertainment.

Now Mitchell's was a dancing academy of the better class and had never come un-

der the ban of respectable persons because Mr. Mitchell had very decided ideas how young people of the opposite sex should behave in his hall, which many a young man had discovered to his discomfort. He would not allow the semblance of unseemly conduct, consequently his dances were very popular with the young men and women of the better class, who loved dancing because it was a delightful way of social intercourse and entertainment.

No drinking was ever allowed on the premises, but many of the young men would steal out during the evening to a restaurant around the corner which dispensed strong liquid refreshment.

After the dance it was customary for supper parties to be made up which usually chose the nearby restaurant as the place of refreshment.

Now this particular evening John and George with their young lady friends were

seated at a table enjoying a light repast. Morrison had drank several times during the evening and he was in a happy frame of mind, not boisterous, but bantering and jolly.

The young ladies, like others, did not pay great attention to the reason of George's gayety, having seen him on many occasions in the same state of rollicking joy, although they knew he had been drinking.

John as usual was quiet and suffered with good nature his friend's jokes on his abstemiousness.

After supper they took the young women home and despite the lateness of the hour George proposed having something to eat.

### **The Testing Time, Deciding the Issues of Life and Death.**

John, being hungry, agreed, not knowing that this night was presided over by a dark

fate—that it enshrined a testing time for this young man which was to decide the issues of life and death.

If the veil which a wise Providence throws over the future had suddenly been thrown aside and John Watson could have seen the history of his life dating from this eventful night, he would have run with horror from his friend, for he would have beheld him as the “Tempter” luring to disgrace and ruin—and discovered that upon seemingly trifling incidents are built great issues, mighty with power for good or evil and momentous with the weight of destiny for the soul’s weal or woe.

Our friends are now seated at a table in the cafe of a hotel whose doors are kept open all night to lure the stragglers that are always found upon the streets of a large city when all good people are in bed. The place, brilliantly lighted, was half filled with its quota of diners and drinkers, for the law



regarding the stated times when strong drink can be served and when it is prohibited is unfortunately elastic enough to be evaded by those whose business supplies the greater part of a large city's revenue—for it is generally known that the officers who are paid to uphold the law are often the worst offenders against the law by overlooking the crimes they are paid to suppress.

### **No Harm in a Friendly Glass or Two.**

George Morrison ordered a Welsh rare-bit and another drink, while John as usual ignoring his friend's entreaty to be social, sat tired and content before a similar dish and a cup of coffee.

The conversation drifted to the discussion of what sociability meant.

Morrison contended that there was no harm in a friendly glass or two, while John thought otherwise, but confessed he had

never tasted liquor in his life and his experience necessarily was limited to observance and the teaching he had received from his father and mother.

His friend expatiated on the effect it had on tired nerves and said that he could not do without it, arguing from the old fallacy that temperance was a virtue and total abstinence a weakness—that there was no reason a man should get the worst of what was manifestly given him to use, not to abuse.

He admitted that drunkenness was a crime against self and society, but, said he, there are scores of other things which if abused by improper use become injurious also to man.

### **The Narrow Line Between Right and Wrong.**

Now, John was in a peculiar mood, that often possesses the minds and hearts of

those who are, to outward appearances at least, strong and decided in their opinions.

The Tempter had started in his conscience a doubt as to his position in the matter, and he began to enter that dangerous land of arguing within his mind "for" and "against" that which he knew to be wrong, at least for him.

He stood on the borderland, the dividing line, on one side of which is sin, on the other goodness, or, right and wrong.

Ah, it is a narrow line, so faint at times that the conscience hesitates which way to step, so decided at others that it stands out sharply defined upon the plain of life and there is no hesitancy which path to travel, because the danger ahead is clearly seen.

### **To Even Hesitate Is Dangerous in the Hour of Temptation.**

Many a soul has been led into the depths of suffering and misery by hesitating for

one fleeting moment in the hour of temptation.

The evil land is full of attraction to the unwary. They seem to hear entrancing songs and see vistas of delight and pleasure. Siren voices whisper to them that all this is theirs but for the asking; alas, the music of the Tempter's voice drowns the wailing cries of those in despair, and the beauty of Sin's face is but a mask to hide the horror and fearful pollution behind it.

It is a peculiar truth that there is an attraction hidden in evil that is strongest for those who stand in array against its power.

It is the paradox that the higher one climbs upon the narrow path that leads to righteousness, the more pressing and consistent is the consciousness of sin.

### **The First Halting Step.**

More fearful the destruction and greater the fall of him who thinks he stands secure

when the first halting step, the first weakening grasp of the ideal, evidences the fact that he stands a doubter outside the walls of the City Beautiful of man's soul, listening to the lure of the Dark Angel who is waging a warfare with devilish cunning against the powers of truth for the possession of man's very life, his spirit, his all.

George Morrison did not realize that he stood toward his friend in the role of agent for the Evil One. He was acting a part that millions of others had played before. He did not stop to consider any consequences that might arise from the seemingly harmless proposition he was making—that his friend have just one drink with him for the sake of comradeship. He did not see that he was aiding a force that counted its destroyed souls by tens of thousands, and on this fateful evening was the seemingly innocent cause of his friend's downfall and ruin. Ah, it is a dangerous

thing to play with fire, when it is manufactured out of substances that destroy the God-like faculties of living souls.

### **Playing with Fire.**

Come, John, have just one glass. A good highball will make you sleep well and feel fine!

John had stood up before a crowd at school and said no and meant it, while here, before one companion, he wavered and fell.

### **Fatal Reasoning. The Symbol of His Defeat.**

I hate to do it, George; it shall be the first and last time. I suppose I ought to know what it is like and what effect it produces, that I may the better judge for the future.

O fatal reasoning!

George hastily called a waiter and ordered a rye highball.

John took the drink, smelled it, and

sipped it. Ah, trusting, devoted mother—would that she could have been there to strengthen the weak resolve, the trifling conscience, and dashed the glass from her boy's lips. That first sip was a poison that was to run like destroying fire through her happiness, and drag the beauty and strength of her loved one in the dust.

Slowly he drank that symbol of his defeat, and now the liquid poison mingled with his blood and inflamed his brain.

Unaccustomed to the power of the spiritous drug he soon fell under its baneful influence and began to talk incoherently and boisterously with Morrison upon some trifling subject that had entered their conversation.

George was secretly enjoying his friend's experience, for the accustomed toper, having become used to the influence of drink, finds pleasure in its effect upon those who are strangers to its spell.

Let us have one more glass before we go, then we will walk home and go to bed. Come on, John, you're a fine fellow. I always thought you had the right stuff in you. Nothing like being sociable.

John was in that condition where all the moral strength is paralyzed and glass follows glass unnoticed without a thought of the consequences to follow.

Quickly he drank another highball and arm in arm with George went out into the street.

The cool evening air had an effect that caused him to walk with unsteady feet.

Morrison started to sing and John with thick voice joined him. A common sight, these two, as they slowly wended homeward. The stars looked down upon them from the quiet sky, and the stillness of the night accentuated their revelry, as if nature endeavored to rebuke with voice of peace their noisy obtrusion upon the realm



of night which she had ordained for the body's rest.

Now, it was the custom for Mrs. Watson to always await John's homecoming, when she knew that he would be late. Whether she half feared something might happen to him or whether some subtle intuition had foreseen in her mind and heart this eventful night we do not know, but even if she retired upstairs to bed, she would listen for him and slipping on a dressing gown go downstairs to say good-night and have a few words with her boy before he retired for the night.

John had bade farewell to George Morrison before he reached home, and now the fact became impressed upon his mind that he would have to face his mother and the thought temporarily sobered his senses.

How could he meet her with the smell of liquor on his breath and the difficulty he now experienced of thinking rationally?

He could not stay away all night because he had not reached that stage where he could look in his mother's face and tell a lie. There was but one thing to do, to brace up and trust to luck she would not discover it.

### **Deceit, the Second Step.**

Already he was about to take the second step that leads downward and away from honor. The question of deceit agitated his brain and he decided to say that he had been unwell if his mother should discover his condition. Yes, drink can be responsible for all the crimes in the calendar of evil.

On approaching the house he saw a light burning in his mother's room and his heart began to beat furiously. For the first time in his life he was afraid and ashamed to look into the face of one who had been his dearest counsellor and friend. His mind was too muddled to realize what this meant

of disgrace and shame, so, boldly going to the front door, he fumbled with his key in a vain effort to insert it in the lock. At last he succeeded, but heard his mother coming down the stairs and as she opened the door he almost fell across the step into the hall. Quickly recovering himself, he closed the door and turned on the light in the parlor, trying all the time to evade the customary kiss which was his mother's usual greeting.

You are very late, son. Come and kiss me and tell me where you have been and what you have been doing.

### The Lie.

As he turned, she caught sight of his blood-shot eyes and strange expression.

Why, what is the matter; are you ill?

Yes, mother, I—I don't feel good tonight.

As he said this she advanced and put her hands upon his shoulder.

In a moment, as by some strange revelation, his condition dawned upon her heart and mind. With a cry she stepped back from him and buried her face in her hands.

O John, John, my boy, my boy, you have been drinking, drinking, drinking!

### **His Mother's Tears.**

That voice of agony seemed to suddenly bring John Watson to his senses.

Never before had he seen his mother suffer and her tears shamed him beyond measure. All the past with its tender associations, his promises, her pride and trust in him, overwhelmed his mind with remorse. Now, with head bowed in shame, he stood before the mother who had watched over him with tenderness, whose love now seemed a two-edged sword that searched his soul with agony, that forced him to fling himself upon his knees by her side and burst into a paroxysm of tears.

Oh, mother, mother, forgive me, forgive me. Yes, I had two glasses of whiskey—forgive me—it will break my heart if you cry so. I cannot bear it.

Oh, mother, I did not mean to drink. I cannot tell how it happened. I am ashamed. Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do?

Then his tears seemed to choke all utterance as he bowed his head in his mother's lap.

Oh, my son, how could you do it? After all these years, all my love, my prayers, in one short evening you blight my hopes and wound my love almost unto death. Oh, my God, have mercy upon my boy! Why did you do it? Why did you do it? I always begged you to think of me in the hour of temptation and I thought that you would never give me cause to doubt you or lose my faith in your strength. What will your father say? This is dreadful. This awful

smell of whiskey fills the room. Oh, it's terrible, terrible! To know that a son of mine has broken his pledge, been untrue to his promise, is more than I can bear. I cannot kiss you because of your condition. John, promise me you will never touch liquor again? You will break my heart.

### **The Mother Love.**

O ye mothers, you alone can know the agony of this woman's trial. Mother love is the strongest in all the world, but it is also the tenderest. It can suffer, but it also feels more acutely its wrong. It can bear, but its burden is always heavier than all others because of the greatness of the love. God has dowered the mother heart with a sensitiveness that feels every slight upon its affection, every opposition to its holy care. A mother's love is of heaven, it is supreme when all others fail and never falters in its devotion.

Thus the heart of Mary Watson imparted its heroic strength to the young man who knelt before her in misery and apparent disgrace.

He felt so small, so mean and contemptible, so unworthy his mother's love that his punishment naturally sprang from that very love which would lay down life itself to save him from this great danger. Lifting his tear-stained face he said: Oh, mother, you must forgive me and stand by me. I never needed your help as I do now. I promise you, I have tasted whiskey for the first and last time. The very thing you deny me I need most. Kiss me, mother, please. Forget what I have done and remember only that I am your son, who is ashamed to look you in the face. Mother, dear, kiss me, kiss me. I swear I will never give you cause to cry again.

Slowly she bent her head and kissed her boy upon the forehead.

**The Enemy Drink Is Cunning and Persistent.**

Oh, John, I pray God that you will be saved from the snare of the Tempter. 'Tis not the present I worry over, but the future. You have fallen, and while now resolved to never more drink, the time will soon come when you will again face this great issue, and you will not be so strong then as now. The enemy is cunning and persistent. Somehow—oh, I must not tell you, but a great fear is in my heart, a doubt that will haunt me night and day—Oh, God, help my poor boy! With this, she put her arms around his neck and burst once more into tears.

Mother, said John, you must not doubt me. Do not cry. God knows I did not mean to cause you suffering. I cannot understand why or how it happened. You must not ask me, only believe in me—it will help you, and it will help me.



My boy, I cannot help you. I can only pray for you and with you that you may overcome this great temptation. Against such a danger I realize you are powerless; there is only One who can give you the strength you need. We must ask Him, believe in Him. Let us kneel down and silently pray that He will guard and keep you always, that in the hour of peril you may remember this night and set your face in His strength against the foe.

Thus, John and his mother knelt down in the chill hour of the early morning and prayed their prayer.

If we could have drawn aside the veil from that mother's heart our eyes would have filled with tears at the great open wound no one but God saw that night.

She prayed long and earnestly for the soul of her boy, that he should be saved from the destruction which seemed so close and real. While John, his face buried in

his hands, rather felt than prayed. His mother's tears, the shame of it all had temporarily sobered him and now his mind seemed an aching blank.

### **We Are Masters of Our Own Destiny.**

He knelt there, thoughtless, powerless.

Ah, dear reader, we are all masters of our own destiny. The saying is only too true—that God helps those who help themselves. There must be co-operation with Him before the result can be obtained or the battle won. Prayer is nothing more than laying hold of God's willingness to help. A mother's tears, a mother's prayers, cannot save from sin and its consequences, for God's love is prescribed by the freedom of the human will.

Mary Watson would have willingly died to protect her son, but the law of human progress involves personal struggle, temptation and the great battle in the heart and

mind between right and wrong. She realized this and her prayer was drenched in tears—tears which sprang from mingled love and fear. She instinctively realized the future danger and she knew the power pitted against her boy.

### **Drunkenness the Product of the First Glass.**

All drunkenness, with its attendant evil, has been the product of the "first glass"! Remorse and resolve has followed as a revolt against the acknowledged evil, but such is the insidious strength of strong drink that it seems, when once it has found lodgment in the body, never to lose its power over the victim. Weeks and months may pass away in fancied security, then without warning it projects its desires into the consciousness and again strengthens its hold upon its kindred appetite.

This is the history of this dreadful scourge, thus it is a constant menace to the

heart not fortified with will and resolve, strengthened by a faith in a power outside of man that is ready and willing to work with him for triumph over its attack.

John Watson did not realize this, but his mother did, so she poured out all the strength of her soul to God that night for him on whom she had placed her faith and love. Placing her arm around her son's neck, she whispered, John, let us say together the Lord's Prayer.

With halting voice and tear-stained face mother and son offered up the petition of that noble prayer, then arising, she kissed him upon the lips and bade him good-night, promising to keep this dark chapter in their lives a secret from Mr. Watson, and bidding her son to be brave for his father's and sister's sake and her sake.

### **A Sleepless Night.**

John Watson was soon asleep—an uneasy slumber, for youth easily casts aside

care and soon forgets. Not so Mary Watson—no sleep closed her eyes that night. Wearily she watched for the dawn, hoping, praying and silently weeping for her boy.

At breakfast in the morning John's appetite was missing and his father remarked about the tired expression in his eyes.

After he had departed from the house he said to his wife, Mary, John does not look well. I fear he is working too hard. I noticed he couldn't eat and there were dark rings under his eyes.

Yes, dear, said Mrs. Watson, John is such an intense boy; but I think he is suffering from only a temporary indisposition. He will be all right in a day or two.

Her heart offered a prayer, unheard but by God, that he would be "all right" as long as life should last.

On reaching the office John saw George Morrison, who met him with a laugh and said, mum's the word, John. Did you get

home all right? We had a good time, didn't we?

George, said John, I'm never going to drink again. I made a fool of myself last night.

Don't talk nonsense, said George. You were a little bit jolly, that's all. It does one good to break away occasionally.

Yes, I broke away. I broke away from my resolution never to touch any liquor and my mother found it out. She was waiting up for me and smelt it on my breath. We had a little scene and I promised her I'd quit.

### **Don't Be a Quitter.**

O, women are fools about some things. My mother is the same way. Whatever you are, John, don't be a quitter.

John recked not that morning that he was not going to be a quitter.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Marriage.

For a time John kept his promise. His mother never mentioned what had transpired that eventful evening when her heart had been torn with conflicting fears and doubts regarding the future of her boy. Many a time when he had been late coming home, the evening hours seemed interminable and fraught with portents that gripped her heart with intense anguish.

She had prayed unceasingly that he might save himself from the pitfall which her sensitive imagination saw yearning before him. When she heard his key in the lock at night her very pulse stood still with dread apprehension lest once more she would have to pass through the fiery ordeal which had left an open wound in her heart.

Anxiously would she wait for his kiss and her secret relief would force a sigh and bring tears of joy to her eyes that one more day had passed and her son still true to his word. She would go to bed with a prayer of thankfulness upon her lips and a firm belief that God was answering her prayers. Yet every day brought the same fears, only to be dispelled when she knew John was peacefully sleeping in an adjoining room.

### **A Mother's Dream.**

Once she had dreamed of him and such was the horror of it that for two days she was confined to bed. She never told her husband the cause of her sickness, because she had resolved to fight this battle alone, although he had remarked once or twice on her care-worn look, attributing it to temporary indisposition; but the dream had increased her fears and was seriously affecting her nerves. She saw John in a state



of intoxication surrounded by a lot of men who evidently were quarreling with him. Suddenly he picked up a chair and dashed it down upon the head of one who seemed to be particularly aggressive toward her son. She even heard the blow as the chair felled him to the earth and saw his head cut open and the man fall bloody and apparently dying on the floor, then with a cry she awoke. So vivid was her dream that she disturbed her husband, who accused her of having night-mare. She passed it off with a forced laugh, but the next day she was a nervous wreck and compelled to stay in bed. Her boy's face, as she saw him with that look of anger, haunted her. It was many a day before she could put that dreadful dream aside and smile at her own fears, believing them the result of overwrought and perhaps morbid impressions.

John went out with George Morrison on several occasions to spend the evening, but

always refused to drink when asked, until George looked upon him with a certain veiled admiration for his persistency, at least, in resisting temptation. The two friends had found much in common in their likes and dislikes and their friendship was unmarred by any differences or periods of coolness which sometimes come between two people who are much in each other's company.

### **Haunted by Fear.**

It was the custom for the corporation that employed them to give an annual dinner to celebrate the year's business and create greater co-operation among the heads of the several departments and the men under their control. No expense was spared to make this festival a success, and such was the bounty of the repast that all looked forward to it as an event which was certain to repay the keen anticipation every one

manifested when the time drew near the eventful night. Good fellowship with much liquid and solid cheer always reigned supreme.

The day had arrived when this dinner was to be celebrated and John mentally renewed his resolve not to partake of anything stronger than coffee or a soft drink.

The evening had been filled with the usual jollification and speech-making and every one was feeling the effects of the general exhilaration when once more the Tempter stood upon the path of this young man's life. The last toast was always given to the president of the corporation and drank in champagne.

### **The Weakening of Moral Strength.**

George Morrison sat by John's side, and when the waiter brought to him the bottle he suddenly insisted that his friend, out of courtesy, should at least drink a glass of

wine in honor of the toast. At first John protested, but that previous temptation had weakened his moral strength and being sensitive, he dreaded calling attention to himself by refusing his friend's rather boisterous demands.

Ah! so easy and apparently unnoticed is the way of sin. So subtle the lure to destruction, so insidious in growth the deadly habit, so secret the weakening of the moral fibre that the victim is unconscious of the peril and lives in plains of fancied security even when he stands upon the edge of the precipice, one step to suffering and death.

John drank that glass of wine and another and another before the night was over, and for the first time in his life became drunk.

After leaving the hotel he with George Morrison and some companions repaired to a resort where they drank and caroused,

until daylight shamed them to seek sleep. George took the helpless John to his room in a cab, where he slept far into the day and on awakening, the first thing he did was to drink a glass of whiskey in an effort to steady his shaking nerves. Never before had he stayed away from home all night and his heart feared for his mother's anxiety. On telephoning her he lied with abandon to satisfy the doubts and fears which he knew she had suffered. He told her that the hour being so late when the dinner and foasts were over he had gone home with George Morrison for fear of disturbing the household, and being tired out had overslept himself. She expressed surprise that he was safe and gently chided him for his seeming lack of thought regarding the anxiety she told him he had caused her.

Oh, the agony of that night! She had walked the floor for hours and Mr. Watson at her solicitation had telephoned the hotel

in an effort to locate their son. He was angry at John for his lack of thought; it created surprise because such action was impossible to reason logically.

Mrs. Watson had kept from her husband the fears which beset her. The fall of their boy before temptation was a secret guarded with a mother's love.

Hour after hour passed away and dawn had tinged the sky before her husband could prevail upon her to seek rest. She could not sleep and her anxiety had fed upon her secret fears as the morning advanced and still no news of John. They had telephoned the office and everywhere that suggested possible information. Mrs. Watson was in a serious nervous condition when she heard her son's voice over the telephone.

### **Deceit the Indelible Stain.**

John had reached in one night an attitude which boded ill for the future. The

practice of deceit had left an unseen but indelible stain upon his soul. With the drink upon an empty stomach he had not hesitated to brazenly tell his mother a lie.

It is an attested fact that the presence, however small, of alcoholic stimulant in the human sytem has an effect to excite the nerve centers above their normal activity with a direct result upon the brain. No man is normal, even under the influence of one drink, when even to the casual observer or to himself there is no direct manifestation of its effect. To this unseen yet devilish force can be attributed the physical and moral havoc of this dreadful curse.

Of all evil power this is supreme by reason of its certain effect upon the character and morals of the victim. It walks with smiling face and beckons to seeming pleasure, but in reality to destruction. The victim is blinded until the lurking danger is too eminent to escape.

The cry of many a poor drunkard is "too late!" "too late!"

### **Treading on Dangerous Ground.**

John had now set his feet upon the broad, yet seemingly, white way, where many a better and a stronger man had found death: death to hope, death to all that life holds most dear. He worked that afternoon as well as he knew how under the aftermath of his revelry and at night again protested that he never tasted wine.

His mother tried to believe him against a voice within that whispered "beware." Poor mother! Little did he realize the extent of his crime against her love. The awful vandalism of honor and the sin against his soul.

His father expressed displeasure at his lack of thought in keeping his mother under suspense. While John made a lame excuse as to the lateness of the hour and



being tired, in his own heart he passed through moments of remorse which were succeeded by indifference and the suppression of conscience. In one night he had travelled far upon the road to ruin.

A year had passed away with its tale of sundry orgies with boon companions and the secret inroad of these events upon the sense of honor and truth. John was not seriously bad at heart and "mother" was still a tender name to him despite the fact that he still practiced deceit to keep from her the knowledge of his drinking, and now a new hope had fortified his heart because he was engaged to a very worthy and beautiful girl, a young woman whose character was such that it could not help but act as a foil to any tendency which Mrs. Watson's fears had erected in her mind as existing through the knowledge of John's one misstep.

**The Confiding Sweetheart.**

Edith Martin was an orphan, the only child of a business man who had died a few years before, and left her a small sum of money, insufficient for her needs, which she augmented by occupying a position as stenographer with the same concern that employed John. Pretty and sensible, she had appealed to him in many ways. A friendship sprung up between them which quickly ripened into love. His instincts were of the best and her influence over John cast a temporary check upon certain habits which unfortunately were becoming more and more frequent. She visited his home many times and Mr. and Mrs. Watson simply idolized her, not only because of the affection which existed between her and their son, but as a product of her natural winsome and sweet nature.

Mr. Watson talked with John and told him he had selected a small but comfortable

house as a gift to them when they should decide to marry. This hastened the young people to think and plan seriously for the future. John had proposed and been accepted and now the date was fixed for the consummation of their love.

Edith Martin knew absolutely nothing or suspected nothing of her future husband's weakness. Perhaps, if she had, or could have looked beyond the present joy she would have hesitated a long time ere taking the final step which bound her happiness to his.

### **Living a Double Life.**

No young man has a right to live a double life. What he expects of a woman he should respect in his own coming and going. If men would realize this, much of the misery in the world inflicted upon the weaker sex would never exist.

John Watson and Edith Martin were

married. After a brief honeymoon we now see them settled in their home. John was devoted to his young wife. Her love had strengthened him against the ever ready and lurking temptation.

His employers had given him advances in salary which provided an income, while not large, sufficient to give them comfort. Their home life was ideal.

John frequently refused to join certain friends with whom he had caroused and soon began to be left alone. Not that occasionally he did not have a drink, habit is quickly formed and not easy to break, but he managed to hide the fact from his young wife. She never questioned him because she did not know. This state of affairs went on for nearly a year and now a great event transpired which creates between husband and wife a living bond—the coming of a little child. For some time they had looked forward to the baby's advent

with anxious love and joy and now the little house was doubly hallowed as home in all that this wondrous name enshrines of happiness and peace.

John's mother praised God that He had so far kept her boy and dowered her grey hairs with the blessed privilege of seeing her own children's children.

Ethel Watson had also married and was a mother, so when John's baby came the grandmother's heart was filled to overflowing with joy and gratitude. One other cloud had come upon her, for her beloved husband had suffered a stroke of paralysis which had seriously threatened his earthly existence and for a time she dreaded the consequence which a long wedded life magnified into a fear that the partner of all her joys and sorrows (but one) was to be taken away. He had, however, recovered, although incapacitated from work.

### A Young Wife's Love.

John's baby was a boy, the very image of his father. The young wife's happiness now seemed complete. Her child's hands around her neck seemed to be symbols of an everlasting love, hands of imperishable strength that held her heart captive in a mystic land—the supreme joy of all women—motherhood. Her husband had become infinitely more noble and precious in her sight. One night she told him that she never knew what love really meant until the baby came. How it had placed her very life as a sacrament upon a holy altar in reverence and gratitude.

With all the enthusiasm of youth she had talked of plans for her child's future, calling forth much merriment from her young husband, who was somewhat more phlegmatic in temperament than she. John, of course, was very proud of the child. It gave an increased interest in his

work and created an ideal which fought the dormant tendencies that once were leading him astray. With a certain timidity he had kept the fact a secret from his employers and friends at the office. Not that he had a motive in doing so, but he was naturally reserved and the hidden knowledge caused him much secret pride.

### **The Tempter's Power.**

After his marriage George Morrison had not been so constant in his calls upon his time; while, occasionally, they had lunch together, John, in the first joys of wedded life had steadfastly refused to spend time away from home. Every evening his young wife and child were waiting near the station to welcome him after the day's work. He looked forward to it as the great pleasure of each day's life.

One evening a clerk employed in the office happened to see him meet his wife

and child, so the next day the secret was out. Laughingly, John was made the butt of many jokes and congratulations. George Morrison chided him for his lack of appreciation of his friends' interest and demanded that he join him in supper to celebrate the event. At first, John steadfastly refused, but the reader already knows that his power of resistance had been undermined and weakened.

We will not discuss the argument between them, because in the end John telephoned his wife that he would be detained at the office and so not to wait supper for him. He was now facing the great crisis of his life, a turning point upon which revolved the future, his own happiness and that of others to whom he owed, in duty, obligations he had willingly accepted.

Edith Watson never for one moment doubted her husband's fidelity, and trustingly accepted his excuse as absolute truth.



**The Moment of Choice.**

The past is inseparably dovetailed into the present and the present to the future.

Every character is a product of its own design and workmanship. The materials of that character's formation are accepted or rejected according to the will and ideal of the builder. When the sum of each life is accounted for, there can be no valid excuse one way or the other. The point arrived at has been subject unto choice, deliberate and final in its relation with self. There is no exception to this rule, which is the law of all progress in nature, as well as in the formation of moral fibre.

John's weakness in the past was now bearing fruit. When the time came fraught with a mighty issue he fell, as a direct effect of causes he had himself created.

**The Debauch.**

The two friends sought a well known haunt to partake of their meal.

George insisted that the baby's health be toasted in champagne, and ordered a quart bottle of that insidious beverage. Hour after hour passed away until both of them were decidedly under the influence of what they had drunk.

John's wife becoming alarmed at her husband's absence had telephoned the office and found it closed. Bewildered and alarmed, she waited in an agony of suspense, fearful of what had become of her husband, never dreaming that he had deceived her. She was afraid to ring up his mother for fear of unnecessarily alarming her, and Mr. Watson, senior, was in a delicate state of health. Wearily and anxiously she waited and watched.

### A Night of Suspense.

John had never given a thought to time or her until his muddled brain received a vague impression that it was very late. The

realization of the hour temporarily brought him to his senses, and he began to recognize what he had to face.

Men of his class are cowards at heart, for tampering with conscience leads to a natural fear of consequences. He imagined that his young wife would be asleep and he could in some way escape her scrutiny and keep her ignorant of his real condition.

Somehow he reached home, but at the door could not unlock it. His actions brought his wife downstairs to let him in. Immediately she detected the odor of liquor and saw his condition. With a cry she fell half-fainting in a chair. Her whole being seemed numbed with the horror of this awful thing, that was as if some frightful power was dragging at her heartstrings and causing her to cry for sudden death. The shock with its revulsion of feeling seemed to destroy in one brief moment all her love, her trust, her hope.

Oh, why did you do it, why did you tell me a lie? she moaned. You don't love me! You don't love me! I want to die; Oh, John, why did you do it? Then a paroxysm of tears seemed to relieve her pent-up soul.

### **Virtue Changed into Vice.**

The sight of her misery and the sudden awakening to what it all meant brought John to a realization of what he had done. In a burst of what he thought at the time to be genuine contrition he begged her forgiveness, told her of the cause, of the wine drunk as a tribute between himself and friend to their child, and gave her to understand it should never happen again. He vowed it was the first and last time. He held the hands of this trusting woman and, looking in her face, swore he never touched liquor before.

Oh, such are the depths into which strong drink will lead a man that in a moment, as it were, it will change virtue into vice and

blacken the white face of truth with the basest deceit.

Here was a young man who could boldly, without shame, lie unto his young wife even when looking in her tear-filled eyes. She believed him, as many a woman before has allowed her love and trust to obtain a mastery over her judgment.

He comforted her and begged her to forget. It was the first little cloud upon their married life and, said he, it shall be dispelled forever.

Over the cradle of their little son, this young wife and mother held his hand and said, Oh, John, promise me for our child's sake! With a lie in his blood and an imagined truth in his mind he answered with a kiss and said, I promise.

### **Chained to a Habit Wrought in Hell.**

That night, one more soul, made in the likeness of God, sold itself for a mess of pottage, and John Watson's feet were chained to a habit wrought in Hell.

## CHAPTER III.

### The Loss of Honor.

It is not to be supposed, during the time of a bad habit's formation, that the higher instincts yield to the lower without a struggle. Many a man who is now the prey of evil tendencies once stood like John Watson upon a vantage ground of fancied security.

The moderate drinker will look with a certain contempt at another's weakness, to whom one drink means the forerunner of many, until the state of drunkenness has been reached. The former will argue that the latter is a weakling and scoff the idea that all men cannot say No if they so desire. The temperate man is the most loud in his denunciation of intemperance, while those

who do not drink at all are the ones who feel pity for those who do, especially for the drunkard.

One cannot dally with wrong. Strong drink is a curse or it is not. Its danger is found in this—that it steals the moral sense and tricks a man into thinking his brain is superior to his conscience.

John Watson argued that he could be temperate and to himself ridiculed the idea that he might become a drunkard. After each occasion when he had drank too much there followed the usual reflex action of the heart against the outrage on his soul and body. He suffered remorse, made resolutions and kept them for a time. While his lips said “never again” he knew that he really meant “I will never take more than one glass, or at most two.” He failed to realize that the man who drank at all, however moderately, placed himself in danger of drinking immoderately. All of John’s

falls from imagined grace were the results of "one glass."

**"Taste Not."**

There is only one cure for drunkenness—"taste not." All the danger is in that first glass.

John Watson was really ashamed of himself. He had reason to be. While the weakening process had made inroads upon his moral strength against temptation, he had not yet reached that point where a man is oblivious to the sense of duty and honor.

The morning after his wife's tears and protestations, had brought remembrance of what he had said and done while under the influence of the liquor, imbibed the night before. The lewd stories he had told and heard, the ribald laughter, the temporary destruction of normal dignity, the money he had spent, all this depressed and humili-



ated him as he sat at breakfast with his wife and tried hard to eat and appear unconcerned.

With a woman's tact she was cheerful and did her best to make him forget what she knew depressed his mind and heart. When she kissed him goodby she said, O darling, I love you so. Don't forget your promise. Sweetheart, it would kill me; I could not live if you neglected me. I will never say another word about it. Come home early. All this day I shall think of you and pray for you. I know you did not mean to do it.

### The First and Last Time?

John kissed his wife's tears away and said, My precious wife, it is the first and last time. Do not give it a thought again. I love you too well to cause you sorrow. Now dry those eyes. I was a brute to you

—never again. I will be home early. Good-by, dear one.

Yes, he really meant to keep his promise; he really did feel what he said, but, he did not realize the strength of the enemy, or that he had already made advances toward the surrender of the citadel of his soul.

### **The Surrender of a Soul.**

The very next day he drank two glasses of whisky with his lunch.

The curse of drink is bound so closely to the home that its depredations affect in a terrible manner the relatives of its victim. It stamps hunger upon the bodies of little children and veils sweet women's faces with shame. It presses its finger of destruction upon the happiness of the innocent. Its awful heraldry is poverty and rags. An ocean of tears have flowed from the results of this scourge. If all the cries that drunkenness has wrung from women's hearts

could be gathered together they would make a dirge that would drown the music of heaven and earth.

### **The Arch-Murderer.**

When this terrific evil is destroyed, sin itself will die and be no more. It is the great arch-murderer. It kills women and little children, choosing for executioners husbands and fathers—those whom the victims love most.

John Watson's wife, like his mother, believed in him while now, every day, he was practicing deceit. For a long time he managed to evade detection, although his home life had deteriorated, inasmuch as there was constant friction between himself and wife, which arose from irritability of temper and a growing indifference to those little attentions so dear to a woman whose love demands a certain return. Mrs. Watson had noticed this: her heart was filled with

anxiety at times as to whether her husband's affection was cooling. Often she had wept and weighed in her mind the advisability of confessing to him what troubled her.

Then she would say, It is only my imagination, and remonstrate with herself for doubting and allowing her fears to exist.

Once, when John spoke crossly to her, she had burst into tears, but, seeing her distress, he begged forgiveness and appeased her by saying he was hasty because of business cares; but something happened which opened her eyes to the true state of affairs.

One evening he came home as usual, but immediately she noticed he was not himself; when she kissed him she detected upon his breath the odor of whisky. She started and commenced to cry. In a moment John's anger overcame his discretion, and he burst out in a tirade against her that frightened her and seemed to crush her soul as if

some awful weight had suddenly been laid upon it.

### Behind the Veil.

I am tired of your whimpering, said he. I know all about it. Yes, I had a drink before I came home, and, by God, I intend to have one whenever I feel like it. So quit your d——n nonsense.

To hear her husband swear, to see his anger, to realize that this was the man who had pledged to love and cherish her forever overwhelmed and humiliated her. For a moment she forgot he had been drinking. His expressions shocked her; then she rebelled. The fact of his broken promise seemed a prophecy of the future, his anger a witness that he did not love her.

### A Prophecy of the Future.

O, how can you be so cruel; you do not love me; I cannot believe you any more.

You swore at me; you will break my heart!  
If it were not for our child I would leave  
you; you are a brute!

John was in a sullen mood, one of those dangerous mental moments that destroy in a moment affection and trust. It is all your fault, said he; other men have a glass of beer or whisky without being nagged to death and I mean to. If you don't like it I do not care. With a muttered oath he went out and slammed the door.

He was in that condition where he honestly believed he was in the right; that his wife was making an unnecessary fuss about something, which didn't really amount to much, and, he thought to himself, "I will teach her a lesson to let me alone in future." Yes, he was going to give her a lesson in the power of drink to rob a man of self respect and honor. At first, he intended staying away from home a short time and then going back as if his pride had been injured,

and he had conquered his sensitiveness of feeling.

### **A Natural Coward.**

Men of John Watson's stamp are natural cowards, and a coward, when given the opportunity to excuse weakness, likes to pose as a martyr.

### **A Night in a Cell.**

Drink blurs and obscures the consciousness of equity and justice. So he went down town and naturally found solace by continuing to drink. Glass after glass soon placed him in that condition where he was refused more, so with a curse he reeled out into the street. The fresh air paralyzed his senses and he fell into the gutter, from whence he was taken to the police-station and locked in a cell.

When he left the house his wife threw herself upon her bed and moaned in agony of soul. Oh, God, I want to die. I want to

die. The dreadful shock to her love and the fact that she was soon to become the mother of another child seemed to rob her of reason. Her mental anguish was such that she could not think. She recoiled with horror from every mental impression that told her the man she loved possessed a side to his character that was brutal and base.

When love is mutilated and wronged the anguish which proceeds from the outraged affection cannot be described in words.

A woman's soul is so much more sensitive than a man's. She is the weaker vessel physically, but the finer and stronger spiritually. Her affections lie deeper, are truer, more patient under stress, quicker in reciprocating kindness than a man's.

### **Woman Bears the Tragedy of the World.**

Some one has said that woman bears the tragedy of the world; this is more or less true. Wherever a man is seen drunk it is a



safe assertion that somewhere a woman is, or will suffer the dire consequences of his crime against himself and her.

Edith Watson endured agonies worse than death that night. Her husband's cruelty seemed more than she could bear. Sleepless, moaning her sorrow unto God, she passed through the weary hours.

Again and again she cried, Oh, how could he do it, how could he?

She tried to believe he loved her in spite of what he had done and said.

She cursed the drink in rebellious anger at its power to change her husband from a lover into a demon of cruelty. She cried, "O John, come home, come home!" It was all some horrid dream, some fearful mistake; thus she reasoned until, exhausted, she dropped off to sleep.

### **Despair.**

She awoke feeling wretched and ill. The sunlight seemed to mock her, and her

child's laughter was almost unendurable. She reasoned that remorse and shame would surely bring her husband home early, and she fully resolved to forgive him. She loved him so. Waiting until nearly noon and no message from him distracted her. She called up his office and was informed he had failed to report that morning. Now another fear gripped her heart; what if he had deserted her; what if something had happened to him and he was dead or dying?

### **The Tender Strength of a Woman's Love.**

Such is the tender strength of a pure woman's love that it forgets its own wrongs when the object of its affection is, or may be, in danger or suffering.

Edith Watson was of that feminine type which endures silently and suffers alone. She was proud, and keenly felt the shame which her husband's actions had thrust

upon her, but John's continual absence had produced a nervous dread which sought sympathy. His mother was always kind and loving to her, so she telephoned her to come over and see her immediately. Something in Edith's voice made Mrs. Watson, senior, suspect trouble. Immediately she thought of that night when her boy came home under the influence of strong drink. Her heart almost failed her for very fear as she hastened to his home. When she arrived, Edith met her at the door and burst into tears.

Oh, mother, mother, what shall I do, what shall I do? she cried.

My child, what is the matter? said Mrs. Watson.

John! Oh, I don't know where he is! He has not been home all night. He is not at the office, and I am afraid something has happened to him. Please help me to find him.

Mrs. Watson's fears now seemed to be verified, and her heart became numb with dread. For a minute she could not speak. Her dream flashed upon her mind, and again she saw her boy's face as she did that night. The look of hate, the uplifted chair, the blow, all passed before her mental vision and paralyzed her power of speech. Eventually she collected her scattered strength and endeavored to question and comfort the weeping daughter-in-law, whom she loved as her own child.

Edith told her of his home-coming, of his condition, what he had said to her and how he went away.

She palliated his offense on the plea of his being overworked and taking the whisky as a stimulant, while she realized it was not so.

### **Mother and Wife.**

She saw how deeply it affected his mother and pitied her, being sorry she had

caused her worry and distress. Then the thought took possession of her that she must leave John. How could she live with him if he was going to treat her so cruelly? So she expressed this to his mother, and the older woman with tears and piteous appeal begged her not to do so.

She said, You alone can save him; you must try; you have this duty to perform, because of the little child. O he will reform. I know he will; he was ever a good boy, loving and obedient. We must work together for him, plead with him, conquer this danger which confronts him by our love. Oh, my daughter, let us pray for him. To desert him now will drive him to destruction.

Ah, the mother love is always the greater love. The elder woman realized what the younger woman did not—that John could not fight this battle alone. Edith Watson's love triumphed one moment and she felt

she could die for her husband. Then immediately followed the sense of humiliation at his behavior, and she rebelled and talked of leaving him. It would have been better for her, infinitely so, if she had followed her instinct and left him.

No woman should live with a man who drinks. His habit surely will bring her to shame and suffering and, if it involves the lives of children, this is the only reasonable and just course to pursue.

Alternately these two, mother and young wife, cried and prayed. They resolved to wait until evening before notifying the police of John's disappearance, little dreaming that he had spent the night in a cell.

But what of John? When arrested he was in a condition which made him oblivious to what was happening. He had slept the hours away at the police-station in blissful ignorance of where he was. At ten o'clock in the morning he was rudely awak-

ened to his position, and ordered to appear before the judge to answer the charge of drunkenness. For a moment he could not realize it, and thought it was a dream; then the memory of his actions overwhelmed him with remorse. Untidy, unkempt, he had to face a charge that would mean disgrace to him and perhaps death to his father if he should hear of it. Immediately he begged permission to see a lawyer, which was granted; being his first offence, the police captain in a measure felt somewhat sorry for him.

### Remorse?

We will pass over that which is a common thing every day in the police courts of our land. John was fined and released with a warning. Weak, his nervous system deranged by the excess, he could not think rationally what to do. He feared going home; he feared the publicity of his arrest

and the thought of his crime against his wife and parents filled his soul with anguish. Then he resolved to telephone George Morrison.

### **No Use Crying Over Spilt Milk.**

George met him, and they repaired to a saloon to talk over what to do. George was sympathetic with his friend; he said: It's a bit fierce, but I have been there myself, once, John. It's no use crying over spilt milk. The first thing you must do is to have a drink to steady your nerves. Then go and bathe and make yourself presentable and then go home and make your peace with the wife. She will be all right. I will telephone her and tell her you were with me all night. It was fortunate you gave a false name to the police this morning. No one will find it out, and in a day or two you will be yourself.

John listened and eagerly accepted this



advice as the best solution of his trouble. He begged his friend to keep it all quiet, which, of course, he promised to do. After having a drink, something to eat and a bath John went home. He did not expect to find his mother there, so when he saw her his heart failed him. He felt a culprit before her. The memory of his deception, his continual breaking of a promise he had made her and also his wife, made him feel, despite the weakening of his sense of duty, mean and contemptible in their sight. Nervous and self conscious of the hidden guilt, he begged them to forgive him.

### **Another Lie.**

Kissing his wife, he said, Darling, once again I ask you to forget what I said. I was not myself; I stayed with a friend, then went for a long walk this morning to try and conquer my nervousness before I came home.

He boldly looked in his wife's eyes and lied to her; while she gently upbraided him for his cruelty and thoughtlessness.

His mother implored him to fight the dreadful tendency, which, she said, will destroy you, John, your wife and child and home. O my son, don't bring my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. Your father, as you know, is very ill. If he knew of this, your staying away from your dear wife all night, it would kill him.

John promised, and kissed his mother, relieved that he was well out of a difficulty which promised to destroy his domestic happiness.

The reader will now see how subtle and sure the habit of drinking had demoralized his sense of honor and rectitude. Slowly he had learned to deceive even those who loved and believed in him.

There is no stagnation in the realm of character; a man is either building up his

moral future or destroying it, progressing or retrogressing; no middle course stays his progress one way or the other. The pitiful part of this is that the element of danger is veiled because of an unconscious attitude toward right in opposition to wrong. When one reaches the condition of being more or less unable to discriminate between the two then the peril to the soul is acute and ever present. John now had reached that stage, and we shall see he followed swiftly the path to destruction.

### **The Path to Destruction.**

His business relations so far had been amicable and his work satisfactory, but in an office employing a large force it is difficult to keep abnormal habits a secret. John found this out.

One day the president sent for him to come to his office. When they were closeted he told John he had heard rumors that

at one time and another he had taken too much to drink. He warned him this must stop, as his work, being important, must be considered before any social or personal habit.

### The Warning!

John was confused because taken by surprise, and at first protested that there must be some mistake, but the president quickly dropped a hint that he knew more than his employee thought, and ended the interview by saying:

Remember, this will not be tolerated—that will do. Good morning. John went to his desk humiliated and chagrined that his employer should know of his escapades.

Weeks went by and, excepting for occasionally drinking a glass or two, nothing happened to foreshadow disaster. John's home life, consequently, was more or less normal. His wife never mentioned the

past, and bore his changeable temper with patience. The knowledge of her condition kept him from actually getting drunk, but many times she smelt whisky upon his breath when he came home at night, endeavoring meanwhile to humor and lead him by love and patience.

### **An Appeal to the Past.**

Occasionally his mother would drop in and have supper with them, endeavoring by her visits and conversation to help him overcome the habit which she knew held her boy in bondage. She endeavored to make him think of the future, how bright it was; of his duty to his home and all that it meant. She recalled the past, many incidents that had made his father and her so proud of their son. She appealed to his finer instincts in every manner she could think of, and prayed daily that God would help him to overcome.

“Unreliable.”

One day John was given an important piece of work that had to be completed by a certain time. In the office he was acknowledged to be clever and original in his business and was often honored by his employers in this way. All the morning he had labored hard upon it, then went out to lunch. The usual time elapsed, and he did not return; another hour passed away, and still he did not come. The superintendent of his department became uneasy and sent a young man out to look for him. He found John drinking and playing cards with some men in a saloon near the factory. He was not actually drunk, but very near it. He delivered his message and urged John to return to the office, which he did, but such was his condition that it was noticeable, and he could not complete his work in time, so it had to be given to another man. He

was reported and again sent for by the president.

You promised me in our last interview you would quit drinking. Here you are, a poor example to your fellows and unable to complete your work. What have you to say? John hung his head and then begged for another chance.

He said, I have been unwell and took a glass of whisky with my lunch; this got the better of me and I had another. I promise it shall not happen again.

### **The Road to Ruin.**

The president, having a son of his own, while angry, felt a certain sympathy for John, and, after pointing out his duty to his employers and his wife said: Young man, you are on the road to ruin. There is but one end to this course; you must pull yourself together and fight this habit. You can do it only one way. You must not touch

intoxicating beverages. This is the last chance, remember; the very next time anything happens that affects your work I shall be compelled to dismiss you. This is final and necessary. You had better go home.

John left the office feeling foolish and, moreover, rebellious. He argued it was no business of the president. I could have finished that work, said he. What's the use? Before he went home he had several more drinks. When he arrived his wife sought her room and locking the door, burst into tears. Yes, she loved him too well.



## CHAPTER IV.

### A Cowardly Blow.

John's life now had become one continuous system of hypocrisy and lying. He knew in his heart that drink had the best of him.

#### The Realm of "Don't Care."

He determined to protect his comfort and interests as best he could under the circumstances. After partaking too much, his feelings of remorse and shame were growing less and less acute. In other words, he was fast reaching the place of "don't care." His personal appearance was undergoing change. His clothes and linen portrayed his attitude toward his life. Once so particular, he was now careless and indifferent. His wife often remon-

strated with him about this, but such was the irritability of his temper that she positively was afraid to say very much on any subject that touched his well being.

### A Hopeless Case.

It was now generally known among his friends that he was drinking. Many of them who used to be quite friendly now met him with a nod and did their best to avoid him. He noticed this, and cursed them under his breath. A day never passed without drinking one glass or more of whisky. His wife had ceased to hope for his reformation and suffered her fears and heart-aches alone, with that dull despair which is the result of tolerance and misplaced love. She knew it was now a hopeless case, and for her children's sake resigned herself to the unknown, yet however the end, certain issue. His mother was fast worrying herself to death. She looked what

she felt, a prematurely old woman. She felt God had not answered her prayers, only her intense love for her son urged her to keep on praying and hoping against hope. It was harder to bear because of her husband's continued illness. His health was such that the knowledge of his son's course would probably bring on another stroke, that might end fatally. She had reasoned and pleaded with John without avail.

### Drink's Prey—a Living Soul.

His heart was now hardened even unto his mother's tears and love. The demon "Drink" had seemingly made certain of the prey—a living soul. She had sent her minister to him, a Godly man, who had with quiet earnestness talked with him and begged him to think of what he owed to his family and himself. John had firmly told him to mind his own business, resenting unto rudeness the good man's interest.

At the office he had lost caste with his employers, because they knew he was not to be depended on, consequently his feelings had been hurt because of this knowledge; all these events only seemed to hasten his downfall.

His wife was expecting daily the birth of her child, and this circumstance was of no avail to curb the awful appetite which was fast bringing him to ruin and disgrace. He simply could not or would not stop drinking.

This particular day he left the office and, as usual, hastened to a familiar haunt, a saloon not far from his place of business. He was known there as a regular customer, a good spender and a good fellow. He now had several friends, the product of his revels, who were traveling the same broad path to ruin.

It was customary for them to play cards in a rear room when there was a sufficient

number to make it interesting. This night he drank and played until closing time and then, half drunk, left with a young unmarried man who suggested they go for a "good time" to a house of ill fame.

### **The Loss of Honor.**

Whatever else John had done to cause his wife sorrow he had never before committed this crime against his duty to her and to his child. Such is the power and deviltry of this curse that steals away sense and reason and honor, the power to think and feel, that it destroys utterly the victim of its spell upon the brain and heart. John consented, and the story of that night is too black with shame to tell.

At home, his young wife gave birth to his child while he was revelling, drunk and drinking, with wantons. Oh, why does he not come home? she cried. O God, take me; I do not want to live. Let me die! Let me die!

Such was her condition that for a time the doctor despaired of her life. He was compelled to give her a strong opiate to quiet the poor tortured nerves which threatened to break the thin thread which held her spirit in the weak body. John's mother (poor, heartbroken mother) was inwardly distracted with grief and shame, yet outwardly, for her daughter-in-law's sake, had to appear and act as if she still hoped for her boy, comforting his wife as best she could. Anon, smiling and saying, He will be here soon, and then retiring for a bitter spell of weeping, her heart breaking for his cruelty, and despairing because she knew that he was once more drunk; where, they could not discover.

**A Disgrace to All That Appertains to Man.**

Early in the morning he came, disheveled and a disgrace to all that appertains to man. When his mother saw him she fell fainting

at his feet. Like a coward he began to cry, thinking that his tears might help soften, in some way, his mother's suffering.

Upstairs his wife lay moaning and calling upon his name, sick unto death. Presently he heard a baby cry, and in a moment realized what had happened. The doctor being there, he was positively forbidden to go to his wife's room. His bloodshot eyes, his slovenly appearance, the smell of drink and stale tobacco smoke was evidence enough of where and how he had spent the night.

When his mother recovered from her faint she could not speak to him. Hope had died in her heart. Her boy was lost. All her prayers in vain. Such were her thoughts. Little did he think that his thoughtlessness, his sin, were slowly killing her. She could not reconcile the memory of her son as a boy, obedient and truthful, his father's pride, her supreme joy, with this depraved man whose heart seemed to

have lost the elements of pity and love. Yet she was his mother; no true mother ever forsook her child, so she determined to still pray and cling to the remnant of her faith in One above.

### **A Remnant of Self-respect.**

Later in the day John was allowed to see his wife for a moment. Her look of pitying reproach pierced his soul. Deeply hidden somewhere was a remnant of his self-respect. He had committed a heinous crime against his name and honor, but there was still a fighting chance. So, again, he mentally made a resolution to quit drinking. We shall see.

Slowly his wife recovered from her illness. She never said one word about the agony endured the night of the child's birth. For a time her husband seemed to be more considerate and thoughtful. Occasionally she would smell whisky upon his breath,



but his general attitude toward her had improved. This was only the calm before the storm.

### **It Smiles While It Kills.**

Drink soils love. It plays upon the lower passions and stirs them to orgies of action that create nearly every crime committed by its victims against decency and manhood. It brings all the evil in man to the surface. We know that men under its influence, who ordinarily are of good character, will do things that would make them blush for shame under normal feeling and instinct. Unspeakable crimes have been added to the sum of man's depravity by reason of its power. It smiles while it kills. It whispers honeyed words while it poisons. It cajoles honor while it leads to shame. It elevates above the normal before it drags to the dark depths of dishonor and hell.

Once more in the middle of the day John

became drunk. The frequency of the habit was blunting the sensitiveness of his wife. By that, we mean, while it caused her suffering and misery, she bore it with resignation. Her spirit was broken. She had nothing to live for but her children. She never went anywhere now, consequently her good looks were impaired. Her interest in herself, lacking her husband's appreciation, made her indifferent towards apparel. Her love was dying, and with it the interest in life which under other and more favorable conditions would have made her marriage ideal. It was too late now to leave him, at least she thought so. Thus she relinquished hope and calmly bore her fate.

### **The Loss of Work.**

The morning after his last escapade a letter came informing John his services were no longer required. So now they faced another problem. Their source of income

was cut off. His wife upbraided him and attributed it to his disgusting habit. He swore at her and cursed his employers one and all.

There is plenty of work for me, said he. I do not care a d——n; they can all go to h——l.

### **What Drink Does.**

His wife saw it was useless to quarrel, but urged him to immediately seek employment. His drunkenness had taken away much of his salary; so much that at times she could hardly make, even with rigid economy, two ends meet. The coming of their child added to the expense, and John had been forced to make an appeal to his mother for help. They had not saved a dollar, and there were several bills owing which now could not be met. Sullenly he left the house to go to the city, apparently in search of work.

When a man drinks he loses the confidence of all who come in contact with him. He cannot be depended on. He is never there when wanted. Drink destroys all sense of obligation. It saps at the root of life's tree and gradually weakens it until it falls, dead and useless. With brain weakened by a powerful drug, with nerves abused by excessive stimulation, with base tendencies given free rein, with morals degraded by animal and mental vandalism, the conscience stupefied by a process of hardening indifference, no man in such a case, is worthy to take a place where the least responsibility to duty is essential, especially when that duty is paid for. Employers do not want drunkards. Society does not want drunkards. God does not want drunkards. A drunkard voluntarily ostracizes himself, cuts himself off from his fellowmen. He is an obstruction in the way, a blot upon manhood, a disgrace to

civilization. He is a continual menace to the community in which he lives.

### **The Drunkard a Sentimentalist.**

As yet, John Watson had brought little suffering upon himself. He did not now care very much about his mother or his wife. Whisky he wanted, always whisky he would have. The past was forgotten when he was drinking; besides, he did not worry much about the past. Only when he was recovering from an excess would something stir in his soul and cause him to whimper like a child. It was not real feeling. The true feeling may exist, but it needs recognition by the brain and heart before its power can be truly experienced. The drunkard is nothing, in sane moments, but a sentimentalist. He has weakened his power of soul vision and heart feeling, so he cries that he may feel his tears and imagine them the symbols of a real sorrow.

When John reached the city he commenced drinking. The thought of his position, out of work, in debt, with a wife and two children to provide for, maddened him, instead of bringing him to resolutely face the issue. Like the coward which drink always makes of a man, he imagined the world was now against him—yes, even his wife and mother. Gradually his heart was fermenting an idea of opposition to all who really loved him, a sure sign that he was fast becoming a drunkard.

### **The Peril of Drifting.**

There comes a time to those who are drifting upon the tide of evil habit toward destruction when they fail to see, or will not believe, it is their own fault. Out of the weakening tissue of their brains they construct a species of defence for their sinful actions. We have heard men make ridiculous excuses manifestly untrue in ex-

tenuation of their crimes against self and those dependent upon them. The spirit of evil is cunning and personifies its guiles in the mind and heart, making the victim believe he is justified in the felony against his soul.

**A Bondman.**

John Watson had reached this stage—the verge of destruction. Strong drink was the master of his instincts. He was a bondman to the most deadly enemy that ever waged war against the soul of man. The first day out of employment was a presage of the end. With boon companions he drank until dark, then made for home, unfit to come into any woman's presence.

**The Coward.**

His wife was irritable and disgusted. Every instinct in her nature rebelled. As he lurched into the house reeking of drink she met him with bitter words.

Said she, You are a disgrace, a coward, unworthy the name of man.

For the first time she called him a drunkard.

### **The Blow.**

The word seemed to madden him to frenzy. With an oath he struck her in the face, knocking her down; then, as if ashamed, he lifted her up, crying and begging her forgiveness. The blow was the breaking point of love. Never again could she have any respect for him. Fainting, her face white with the pain and shock to her feelings, she moaned, O God, that I should come to this! Leave me; I hate you! Oh, you coward, you brute! You will kill me! That such a man should be the father of my children!

Shame and indifference struggled in John's heart for mastery, but his senses were blunted and his brain fogged by the



fumes of liquor. He said, It was your own fault. I didn't mean to hurt you; what did you call me a drunkard for? You're turning against me, like the rest of the d——n bunch.

### **The Breaking of a Woman's Spirit.**

She did not answer him. Poor wife and mother! Out of the darkness that had settled like a heavy cloud upon her life she saw the faces of her two little ones. Her soul was wounded almost unto death. Her feelings outraged and abused. Her position as his wife unbearable. She could not think, or pray. Hope was dead. What could she do? Leave him? Where could she go? If her spirit had not been weakened and crushed she would have done so, but now, she thought, it was too late. She must try to suffer in silence, to do the best she knew how, for the sake of the little ones. Ah, it would have been better for her

if she had gone out into the street and sought the charity of neighbors than to have suffered this crisis to pass thus. For weeks she did not speak to her husband. He came and went, how and where she did not care.

One day he came home and threw upon the table some money. Said he, I have mortgaged the house; we cannot starve. It was not much that he gave her. Already they were beginning to feel the pinch of poverty. His mother seldom came to see her because of Mr. Watson's continued sickness. They, too, were in rather straitened circumstances, so she could not borrow from them. John had kept her almost penniless, seemingly without regard, in utter thoughtlessness—many a time she had gone hungry. She would rather starve than ask him for a nickel. His father's illness had cost a great deal, so he was afraid to tell him of his financial stress. He would

want to know why. The history of his son's drinking and loss of work had been kept from him. It would have killed him to know that his boy, whom he almost worshipped, was now a drunkard, out of work, fast drifting to even lower levels.

### **A Dreadful Fear.**

John's mother was aging fast. His actions had preyed upon her soul and body. Her husband's sickness and her boy's career had prematurely made her an old woman. She suffered from insomnia, and her nerves were wrecked. Edith had not told her one-half of what had happened. She often forgot her own sorrow in pitying that which was fast killing her husband's mother. She could feel and live sympathy because she, too, was a mother. Often would the fear take possession of her that her own little son might some day become a drunkard. Then she would hug him to

her bosom and cry, O God, no, no! If so, take him now, that I may be spared that. Better death a thousand times than a drunkard's life.

She asked John how much he had mortgaged the home for; he told her, Never mind, it's none of your business.

Their life now was lived in two different spheres. She seldom saw him, excepting in the morning and occasionally when he came home early at night. She found solace in her children. They seemed to symbolize the love which once was hers, now gone, dead forever. The future veiled what? Often she made plans to go away and try and support herself and little ones. Then her heart would fail her, and hope resurrected itself out of the ashes of the past and she would say to herself, Perhaps when John finds work he will do better. So she would resign herself to the present once more.

Weeks passed and John did not succeed in obtaining employment. His appearance was against him. He carried about with him that definable atmosphere of the man who is at variance with life. He was untidy and seldom without the smell of drink upon his breath. Wherever he applied he was met with polite information that the vacancy was filled. It appeared as if employers knew by instinct that he drank.

### **"Down and Out."**

The president of the concern where he had worked gave him a good reference as to ability, but refused to answer other questions regarding his character. This obstructed his success; besides, he did not realize his position, hence he did not worry very much. But the money he had raised on his home was fast disappearing. He was still drinking, and his excesses were becoming more frequent. The dwindling of his

money made him ugly in temper and vile in language. His wife kept out of his way; she was positively afraid of him.

His reputation as a drunkard was now public property. All his friends, who once drank with him a friendly glass, now shunned him.

A man who drinks without actually reaching excess is usually the enemy, at a distance, of the man who is a drunkard. Some men are weaker than others, and the crime of many a life's destruction through drink can be traced to those who are not adverse to a glass or two, but possess greater strength than the brother man. They are, it may be unconsciously, leading to wreckage and ruin. That is another danger of the drink evil. If George Morrison could have foreseen his friend's course the night when he prevailed upon him to drink that first glass of whisky, he might have hesitated at the dreadful end

involved. Now it was too late. The little spring upon the mountain-side becomes a mighty river before it reaches the sea. The first pandering with conscience, the little break in the wall of resolution, may enlarge until evil floods the soul with habits that bring it unto moral death.

John was now facing poverty. There was one thing to do—sell the house. This he did. One night he came home and told his wife she had to move. This startled her. She had grown to love the place where her children were born, despite all it had witnessed of her misery and shame. She remonstrated with him, begged him to find some other way out of his difficulty. She meekly asked him what he had done with the mortgage money. The memory of his losses at cards, his reckless spending for drink, made him angry.

Shut up, said he, we have to get out, and get out quick. I guess you have no kick

coming. She saw the uselessness of arguing and held her peace. A week later they were living in two cheap rented rooms in a poor locality. The neighborhood was populated with foreigners and the very atmosphere got upon her nerves. She cried all the first day. There was no bathroom, and the children soon began to look pale for lack of fresh air. John's mother came to visit her and when she saw the environment burst into tears. The two women tried to comfort each other. Edith loved Mrs. Watson as a mother. Her heart was filled with pity at the older woman's sorrow.

She endeavored with effort to say, it is only temporary, when John obtains work we shall immediately move; then she, too, wept bitterly.

### **A Derelict Upon the Sea of Life.**

John did not care; he was past that. So long as he had a place to sleep when he came home satisfied him. His continued



depravity had blunted his sensitiveness to anything affecting his home. All day, and often all night, he spent carousing. He had given up the thought of work. Now a confirmed drunkard, his grip on decency and honor was gone. His wife's tears, his children's welfare, were hidden in dissipation. He could not see, because he was blind. The spiritual faculties were buried beneath animal passions. Indeed, he was worse than an animal. A degenerate, a derelict upon the sea of life. A moral and physical wreck.

**A Devil of the Pit.**

The greatness of man, his dignity and high place in the realm of life is discovered in his fall. The depths into which he can descend tell of the heights from which he came. The devils presuppose angels, sin suggests righteousness, hell—heaven. This is the tragedy of human life.

Without actually committing a crime punishable by the law, John Watson had

fallen almost as low as a man can. Love, honor, pity, self-respect, truthfulness, duty, had died within him, been drugged to death by drink. He stood, now, something less than a man, possessed of one desire, to satisfy the craving which erected in his heart an altar to Baal, whereon was sacrificed all that makes life worth while. The spirit of evil dominated him. Every glass of cursed drink ushered into his heart a devil of the pit. He existed in a realm where reason groped in utter darkness and a voice whispered continually in his ear, more drink, drink more. He had sold his soul, bartered his conscience, thrown away as worthless his very life. There was still a compensating force to be reckoned with—he must pay the price. The law says—Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. John Watson was sowing the wind, he was to reap the whirlwind.

Mr. Watson, senior, was now sick unto

death and his mother had begged him to pull himself together for his and his dying father's sake. He had visited the old man but once in six months, which had preyed upon his mind. He could not understand how it was that his boy, the son whom he thought loved him so, could ever neglect him. All kinds of excuses were evolved to overcome John's indifference. It troubled his father and in a measure hastened his end. His mother and sister each plead with John, all to no use. To tell the truth, he was afraid to face his father, fearing he would detect his condition. Then the old man died, his last words were—where is my boy? I want to see him. As the breath was leaving his father's body, John, surrounded by degenerates like himself were drinking themselves drunk.

**His Father's Death.**

This last sorrow blotted out from his mother's life all hope for her boy. That he

could be so cruel as to neglect his dying father almost broke her heart. She could not understand it. Her soul revolted from the thought and her agony, apart from her dreadful loss, crushed her and made her pray for death. But another blow heavier to bear was to descend upon her.

**An Outrage Upon Love.**

On the day of his father's funeral John was not to be found. The previous night he had not come home. Such was his degeneration that the greatest obligation possessed no power to keep him sober twenty-four hours. By the side of the open grave of her husband Mrs. Watson felt the full effect of this outrage upon her love—with a cry she fainted and for weeks her life was despaired of. During all that time John never went near his mother's bed. His fall was now complete. The power of drink had captured another soul. One more life was hastening to a drunkard's end.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Besetting Sin.

A man's besetting sin usually attacks his moral armor in the place of weakness. The test of temptation may not always spring from the besetting sin, but in nine cases out of ten where we see a soul stoop to dishonor, no matter how foreign the act to the weakness we know to exist in the man's character, if we traced the effect to the cause we should discover that it directly resulted as a natural event from the particular evil tendency which was that man's "besetting sin." Thus the habit of drunkenness can produce almost any evil in the calendar of crime. It is impossible for a man to be addicted to strong drink without weakening and destroying all his better and best instincts. When under its baneful influence

he is at once a thief, a liar, a coward, an adulterer, aye, a murderer. He places himself under the sway of devils and concentrates the power of evil in his brain and heart.

### **Under the Sway of Devils.**

John Watson was no exception to this awful truth. His whole being had undergone a transformation. Even when sober, which was seldom, his language and actions bespoke the brute. He could not speak without an oath. Whatever he did bore the stamp of utter selfishness and indifference to others. The time he spent at home between his orgies brought misery and suffering to his wife and children. They rejoiced, even the youngest, when he departed. His poor broken-hearted wife had lost her beauty and spirits. She suffered the indignities cast upon her with almost an animal's resignation. She no longer thought of the future. Happiness was not for her, all hope

had perished long ago. At times she would cry and pray God to end her life; then she would say—thinking of her little ones—No, no, no, and once more resign herself to fate. She never went out excepting on the block where they lived to give her children exercise. She had no ambition, no desire to do or become. The time had passed with its opportunity when she could have left her husband and faced life alone. He had, in a measure, dragged her down with him. Her love had deceived her inasmuch as it led her intuition astray. She once believed she could save her husband by devotion and sharing with him the peril that threatened his life. Now she saw her mistake.

### A Cry of Despair.

His mother still kept to her bed, her heart o'ershadowed with a great darkness, but she was glad her son's father had passed away without suffering from the disgrace

their boy had brought into their life. Still she prayed, but now it was the cry of despair, not the petition of faith. Her mother heart was breaking. She could not reconcile God's love to this dreadful sorrow and mental anguish. She endeavored to reason at times what she or her departed husband had done to deserve this—to be the parents of a drunkard. Then she would faintly murmur "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. O God, Thy will be done." She firmly believed that it was God's will she should endure the burden of disgrace and pain. Yet she could not see or think why her boy should be singled out as a victim of the destroyer "Drink." It seemed so cruel and heartless. She failed to realize that God had nothing to do with it. Man himself creates and sustains sin, or the conditions that make such a fearful retrogression possible in the soul of man, as this story bears record.



**Sustained by the Law.**

If the saloon had not existed John undoubtedly would have escaped the shocking consequences of that first glass and the subsequent degradation of his character. The menace was thrust in his path, sustained by the Law, which, instead of protecting this citizen of the commonwealth, deliberately became, *particeps criminis*, an accomplice in crime. And what a crime! Connivance with a power that is the cause of nearly all the offences the Law exists to punish. A strange anomaly this, yet absolutely true. Wherever strong drink is openly allowed to be sold, there you will find corruption in high places, the ascendancy of crime, all the tears and sorrow which this history portrays. A barbaric heathen condition, a mockery of civilization and a travesty on the word Christendon, for He who came to save men is wantonly crucified afresh and put to open shame in the market-place

wherever the saloon hangs its garish sign to lure men to destruction. War kills its thousands. Strong drink its tens of thousands.

**War Kills Its Thousands, Strong Drink Its Tens of Thousands.**

John Watson and his wife were now feeling the pinch of poverty. The little jewelry they possessed had been pawned and nearly every article of household furniture sold. Some weeks they had difficulty to even pay the rent of the miserable rooms called home. His mother was powerless to help them. Her husband's long illness, together with what she had previously loaned her daughter-in-law, had drained her purse and now her source of income being reduced she was compelled to refuse her son further assistance. He had failed to obtain employment. No one would have him. His case seemed hopeless, indeed; he gave up trying

long ago. Now he was reduced to hang around the bars of places where he had spent his money waiting and cringing for the whiskey his body craved. He had sunk so low that he was literally a beggar, a miserable wreck of a man to whom life meant but one thing—the means to buy and drink the poison which had ruined him. Occasionally when sober he acted as a “look out” for a saloon which ran a faro game. But he was not to be trusted one moment if he had money.

### **A Miserable Wreck of a Man.**

This particular day he had met George Morrison. George had managed, through a different temperament or one of those exceptions of the rule to keep his position. He was not an habitual drunkard, but a moderate and occasionally immoderate drinker. John had seen very little of his former friends since he had become a drunkard.

They shunned him and would have nothing to do with him. George had lost track of him since he lost his job and suddenly meeting him upon the street the sight of his face with its awful story of dissipation upset him. He could hardly believe his eyes that this pitiful object was once the young man who worked by his side and had refused to drink when first he knew him,—

### **A Modern Pharisee.**

but like the Pharisee of old he thanked God he was not such a sinner, gave him a couple of dollars and passed on, recking not that he was primarily the chief cause of his brother's downfall.

Immediately on leaving his former friend John repaired to a favorite haunt and bought a bottle of whiskey and, as usual, began to get drunk. In his cups he became ugly—always ready for a quarrel. He had been in many a fight, but good for-

tune also kept him from the clutches of the law. Most of this day he played cards and drank with a couple of degenerates like himself. He won enough to supply the unquenchable craving that possessed him and when night came he was on the verge of that condition where the brain is inflamed to commit any crime.

### **"The Quarrel."**

One of his companions had repeatedly cursed him and called him vile names, which once or twice nearly resulted in blows; naturally their tempers were incensed and it only needed a little more whiskey to bring the slumbering fire of passion into flame. The saloon where they were drinking was on a side street and noted as a place where men had been injured in brawls; once a man had been killed there in a drunken quarrel.

Something was said that aroused John to frenzy. In a moment the table was

overturned, the bottle and glasses hurled across the floor and the two men fighting like demons. Before they could be parted John took a heavy chair and raising it aloft brought it down upon the other man's head and shoulders, knocking him senseless and bleeding to the floor. It was a miracle he did not kill him. The police and ambulance were summoned, John was taken to prison and his victim to the hospital. He now faced a serious charge. It was a week before the surgeons would pass an opinion whether the man could recover; fortunately for John he did or it would have been "manslaughter" instead of disturbing the peace.

When three days had passed and John failed to come home his poor wife became distracted with apprehension that he had been killed or had gone away. Such was her love that even his cruelty could not destroy it.

**The Beautiful Heart of a Woman.**

O beautiful heart of woman that can enshrine such devotion. Such affection is miraculous. It defies analysis.

She still loved him and prayed for his deliverance from the "Curse." She had made up her mind long ago that her life was bound to his whatever befell. Not that a woman whose spirit is unchained and free can understand this submissive devotion—suffice it that it exists. A woman's love can, and does, suffer long and still remains unbroken.

The writer once saw a scene in White-chapel, London, which will illustrate this. A drunken man was beating his wife upon the street, he had knocked her down and was literally stamping upon her with his heavy shoes. A pedestrian passing by, outraged by the sight, promptly knocked the brute into the gutter. In a fury the woman sprang to her feet and turned upon her de-

liverer with rage. He had to beat a hasty retreat to escape her nails and teeth.

In a sense this illustrates Edith Watson's blind, hopeless love for the man she called husband. It is inexplicable, but true. This devotion of hers seemed to be the grave of a self-respect, an independence she once possessed but had lost forever. There was a time when she could have left him—not now. His life dominated hers with the environment and result of the sordid hellish appetite it enshrined. She was paying the price with a vengeance.

### **Paying the Price.**

Driven to desperation she telephoned the police and discovered her husband was in prison waiting trial for his crime against the public peace. Now she faced a new disgrace. O that it should come to this. Her husband a felon. His name a reproach, dishonored, odious. Who can know without



passing through a similar experience what suffering she endured? It seemed as if her cup of sorrow was full to overflowing. The sight of her little ones was almost more than she could bear. Their laughter mocked her, the peace and innocence in their eyes brought the tears streaming down her face. She felt she could not endure this new trial. When the officer came to the house to inform her that she had to appear as a witness in her husband's behalf she fainted. She could not bear it alone, yet she dreaded sympathy. Even the rough neighbors felt sorry for her, and many offered to take care of the children if she wanted to go out. Although they heard all about her husband's imprisonment they tried to hide the fact from her. Her grief frightened them. There was something in it of refined suffering they were unaccustomed to. It touched their rough souls with pity.

Edith reasoned with herself whether she should tell John's mother. She felt she must seek comfort, but feared what result it might have upon Mrs. Watson's now precarious health. Having decided it was unwise she nerved herself to bear this calamity alone.

### The Drunkard's Wife.

The day of the trial arrived; giving her children into a neighbor's charge she went to town, her heart weighted by a world of woe, her soul crushed with sorrow, her face flushed with shame. It seemed as if every person she met said, that's his wife, the drunkard's wife. With trembling limbs, half fainting she took her place with other witnesses. Her fragile form and refined appearance caused comment and pity among the onlookers. Even the judge frequently cast his eyes upon her white, tear-stained face. When her husband was

brought in handcuffed she uttered a little cry that reached his ears. For once he hung his head in manifest disgrace. Once before he had stood in the dock to answer a charge of drunkenness. His wife did not know this, however. Now the charge was more serious. He could be sent down for six months or a year. The police knew his name; there was no chance to hide his identity. The sight of his wife unnerved him and he began to cry. She saw his tears and prayed that this experience might somehow be the means of saving him. Even surrounded by all the terror the theatre of Law inspires in the innocent she took fresh hope unto her bosom and dared to thrust her faith upon the future, that this—this shame—might breed remorse and regeneration. Little did she dream that this was the forerunner of an experience to come, weighted with the issues of life and death.

**Still Hope Lives.**

The prisoner was now arraigned, the charge duly sworn and the evidence taken; then, as if in a dream she heard her name called and was half lifted to her feet to take the oath as a witness for this man whose name she bore.

Slowly the story of her married life was dragged forth, of their home, her husband's work, their children, of the gradual mastery by strong drink of his soul and body. Then, with sudden bravery that frightened her she pleaded for leniency. She told the judge how good he was when sober. She lied. She acted a part to save her husband from prison.

She said "Spare him this once, Your Honor. We are in straitened circumstances. O spare him for our little ones' sake. He did not mean to do it. He will never do it again." Between her tears, she

spoke of his mother, how ill she was and that this might kill her.

Then John was asked what he had to say. He could only hang his head and whisper, Nothing.

The judge pointed out to him the disgrace and suffering his actions had brought upon his family. He gravely admonished him that if he persisted in this course it would lead to worse danger than that he now faced. Then he said: "Under the law I can send you to prison for a long term. I have taken into consideration the testimony of your wife and sentence you to the penitentiary for three months with hard labor, in the hope that this punishment will give you opportunity to think and prepare you to start anew when you shall be released."

### **To the Penitentiary.**

John heard the judge with sullen silence. His heart and brain fired with revenge

against the quiet man who, with a word, could send him to jail. He was now an enemy of society as well as himself. A revulsion of feeling imbued with hate was taking possession of him—hate that boded ill for the future. In a measure he cared not. Drink had killed what he should have felt of self-abasement. Thus he was led away to prison. Not even his fainting wife stirred him to pity or remorse. So the law was vindicated. Was it? The law by its own paradoxical process had begun to make a criminal. The cause of nearly all crime—the saloon—it protected and sustained; the crimes springing from its own making it punished rigorously. Verily, a travesty on Justice and Truth.

Edith Watson reached the place she called home distraught with mental anguish. What could she do? How could she bear this awful disgrace? What was to become of herself and little ones? Without

money and friends the future seemed hopeless. She was not strong, the continual worry, poor food, little exercise had impaired her health. Something she must do, they could not starve. Two or three days passed away and she made up her mind to seek a position akin to the one she occupied before marriage—those happy days, gone forever! Luckily, John's old employers, for whom she had worked, heard of his disgrace and wrote her to know if they could be of any assistance in this trouble. Here was a chance; could she accept it? Every one she met seemed to know of her husband's imprisonment. This shamed her and paralyzed what little ambition she possessed. Her clothes were worn out, her self-respect abused and soiled. Some voice seemed to be ever whispering: "Your husband is in jail, your husband is in jail." Oh, no, no, she could not face the people who once knew her in prosperity. She must try

to manage, somehow. Perhaps, when John came out of prison he would go with her out West and they could begin life anew. So she wrote thanking the corporation for offering her assistance, but declining their help. Being clever with her needle she obtained a little work from people who heard of her distress and earned enough to buy food, although the rent was running behind and that worried her.

John's mother indirectly heard of her son's imprisonment. At first she would not believe it, and when the dreadful fact was verified she, too, passed again through the fires of sorrow and shame. Sick and broken in health she aged ten years that dreadful day—the day she learned her son was occupying a felon's cell. She blamed Edith for not telling her.

“Oh,” she said, “I might have saved him; I might have saved him from that.” When she knew how his wife had pleaded



for him, how brave she was, how she had suffered openly the shame and misery, doing all she could to keep him from prison, her heart rejoiced, even in the midst of her affliction, that God had given her so devoted a daughter, so true a woman, that she could love her erring son even unto the death in heart and mind of all a woman holds most dear in pride and confidence. The broken-hearted mother still had hopes that this heroic love would yet win the victory against drink for the possession of her boy's soul.

She, too, was obliged to sell the old home. It had been mortgaged before her husband's death. Sickness, a financial loss, and the strain upon her purse in helping John had left her in embarrassed circumstances. Ethel Watson was married to a poor man whose income was barely sufficient for the needs of their young and growing family, so no help could be ex-

pected in that direction, besides she had turned against her brother with bitter resentment at the reproach he had wantonly brought upon her father's name.

### **Waiting for the Prodigal's Return.**

Mrs. Watson still loved her boy; she would always love him, and felt keenly her daughter's attitude in the matter. She had nothing now but him to live for, so she decided to get three or four rooms and make a brighter surrounding for him when he should be released.

Talking it over with her son's wife the two women with tears and hope made their plans. They would all go away when John came home to some place where they were unknown, perhaps God would lead the prodigal to a better life, for him and them. Having found a nice little cottage in a distant part of the city, Mrs. Watson, senior, had her furniture moved there and with

her son's wife and children settled down to await his coming.

Those three months of weary watching and praying and hoping seemed an eternity. When the heart is filled with grief the hand of time is laid upon the soul with cruel restraint. They had counted the weeks, days and hours and now he was expected at any moment. His faithful wife had gone to the jail to meet him and the old mother was listening intently for their approach. She had prepared a tasty supper for him. At last he came. His wife left mother and son together. She could not bear to see the older woman's tears of joy. Her own heart was full to overflowing. She had met her husband, kissed him and held his hand all the way home. She tried to be happy, to show him that at least there were two souls who loved him, who still believed in him, who were sharing his humiliation with him.

John had not expected this. His wife's love touched his heart and without saying a word he had held her hand tight in his and bowed his face upon his breast.

O God, there was hope yet, she thought. With endearing terms she answered his simple question, not telling him of his mother longing and waiting for her boy.

The sight of her broke through the barriers he had set up in his soul. Her tears, her tender, affectionate embrace as she looked into his eyes and said, "My son, my son," overwhelmed him with penitence.

### **Penitence?**

"Yes, mother," said he, "this day is the beginning of a new life for me. I will not drink again—for your sake, for my wife's sake, for the little ones' sake. O God what a brute I've been! Forgive me—forgive me." Then he broke down and wept.

"God is good. He has answered my prayer," said his mother. For the first time

in many a day she and her boy's wife were happy. They believed in him. The past was as some horrid dream, a nightmare, they had suddenly awakened to find it all untrue. That meal seemed a veritable sacrament, a promise for the future, a pledge that love should triumph in the end.

After supper they made their plans. Yes, they would forget the past and live for the future. They would go away. John's health had improved in prison. The coarse fare and exercise had done him good. The memories gleaned there under restraint still rankled in his heart, but they slept before the smiles and tears of his mother and wife. He was really inspired to do better. He could see now, when free from the curse of whiskey, what he had done. He had been a coward, a brute, a devil. Oh, but he would atone for the misery and anguish he had caused them. He meant it, or thought he did. They still believed in him,

so his resolutions were strengthened and he felt them to be true. He began to argue with himself that it never would have happened if he had not drank too much. So he made excuses with his conscience, diminishing the fact that his will had everything to do with it; alas, he forgot that. Temptation still laid in waiting. Would he be equal to the test? We shall see.

### **Pandering With Conscience.**

After supper they gathered around the fire and inspired him with hope. His mother, with simple faith, told of her belief in God's love, that if they asked Him He would help and tell them what to do. Prayer would surely bring strength and guidance. So they knelt there, while she prayed for her boy's future, that God would keep him from the great peril that had almost destroyed him utterly. As she prayed he cried. Then he vowed never to touch whiskey again.

**Resolution!**

He said, mother, wife, I will live this disgrace down. God bless you for your love. Never again will I cause you tears.

That night his mother thanked God her prayers at last were answered, and fell asleep crying for joy.

She dreamed she saw her husband and upon his face was a look of dreadful sadness. She called out to him, Our boy is saved. With a long and mournful glance he gazed at her; then slowly shook his head and whispered, No, No! With a cry she awoke. Troubled, she could not again woo sleep. Her dream seemed a presage of doom. This was the second time some unseen power had warned her of the future. What if John should fall again? The thought persistently clung to memory. When morning came she half feared that he had gone away. As she looked into his eyes she thought she saw in them the face

of her husband saying No, No! She burst into tears and as John and his wife tried to comfort her she moaned, Yes, Yes! O God it shall, it must be.

**Doubt.**

What are you crying for, mother? said John. You, my son, my son. Don't worry, it's all right. I've promised. With that he kissed her and went down town to see about their departure for the West.



## CHAPTER VI.

### The Murder.

Habit is so common that we seldom realize that most of our life is built upon it. Could we analyze every action we should discover in tracing it back that it resulted from some habit, it may be not akin to it. So woven together is the present even to the far-off past that life appears a unit when in reality it is made up of countless little and great tendencies of character, forming personality, that which gives us distinction from our fellows. Habit makes the man. Life, whether good or bad, is nothing more or less than habit. Thus it is of the utmost importance if we would build well, to be careful of the quality and relationship to goodness of what we are accustomed to do and say. As little drops

of water are the nucleus of the great rivers and seas so little actions may form a mighty impulse for good or evil.

### **The Curse of Habit.**

John Watson had formed a habit—only “one glass.” The “one glass” was succeeded by others until the habit of drinking was a part of his very life. It took possession of him, dominated him with an irresistible desire. He was a living witness to its power. When he made this last promise he meant it. He had firmly resolved not to drink again. The three months spent in jail, where he was debarred from gratifying his thirst for whiskey, had really done him good, in the sense that now he felt stronger physically and morally to combat his enemy, but he did not know how strong the chain of habit had been forged, how deep in his nature “the curse” had taken root. He was to discover this very soon.

With his wife's and mother's affection deeply impressed upon his heart, without drink for three months, he felt a new man, despite the fact that his name was now stained by imprisonment, but even that failed to dampen his enthusiasm as he made his way to the city resolved to ignore his old haunts and companions and once more hold up his head as a husband, father and man.

### **A Day Fraught with Destiny.**

Yes, John Watson was now facing the great crisis of his life—a day fraught with destiny, great with portents for weal or woe.

There is a time in every man's life that is a pivot upon which the future days and years revolve with their story of success or failure. This is demonstrated all around us. Crises in business, in moral arrest or development, in health, in the question of choice between this and that. Sometimes

the importance of this is hidden in a trivial event which afterwards bore witness to its bearing upon the issues of life and death. Many a man has passed through the experience of missing a train, only to hear later that the train had been wrecked and many lives lost—that was a crisis in his life but he knew it not. These experiences beset us every day. John Watson was about to reach that moment which would decide the way of life, up or down, good or ill. He thought he was prepared, habit said no—circumstance said no.

### **Sin Is Relative to Habit and Habit to the Soul.**

There is a mystery in a man's coming and going which looks at times very much like "fate." It seems as if some power is set for the rising or falling of human souls, at least we think so, because we forget that the present is largely built upon habit,

that much which happens we have secretly planned in our own hearts and minds. Here is a particular temptation confronting a man. Will he fall? That depends. If he has submitted to kindred evils the chances are that he will. If he has cultivated the opposite virtue, it's almost a certainty he will not. So sin is relative to habit and habit to the soul.

John Watson no sooner reached the city when he met one of his old companions—a man who had been present when he was arrested, who had seen the fight. Already the Tempter was lying in wait, the great moment had arrived.

### A Jail-bird.

“Am glad to see you,” said the man, “come and have a drink.”

“I am sorry,” said John, “but I have quit ”

“Quit? that's a joke. What for?”

"Well, I have promised my mother and wife never to touch it again."

"What's the use?" said his companion. "I promised my wife before she died, but a man must have something to keep his spirits up when he's down and out. What chance have you got now. You're a jail-bird; no one wants you; you've still got 'the step.' You've 'done time.' That cooks your goose."

### **The Battle Between the "Higher" and the "Lower."**

Suddenly a revulsion of feeling o'erswept John. All his good resolutions vanished. "Yes," thought he, "what is the use? A jail-bird. My God, that's true. They can all tell it. I've got 'the step.' Yes, I'm down and out."

His mind was torn by conflicting emotions. The man's brutal reminder of his imprisonment, his position in the eyes of

his fellow-men, his poverty, all this arose before him as something he could not escape. Yet within him, the higher in his nature was making a last desperate effort to lead him from taking the irrevocable step. His mother's tear-stained face rose before him; he heard his wife's voice saying, O John, for my sake, for the children's sake; their laughter smote upon his heart; then his process of reasoning took him into the verge of utter ruin. He was a jail-bird. He had the mark upon him; he had ruined them, given them a stigma that time could not eradicate. What hope was there for him? None. He was down and out.

Just then at this psychological moment, fraught with destiny, he reached with his companion the open door of a saloon in which he had often become drunk. Two or three customers inside caught sight of him hesitating on the sidewalk, still half-refusing the pressing invitation for just a

glass. Out they came, and gripping John by the hand and arm half pulled and led him to the bar.

"Why, here's John Watson," said one of them.

"Glad to see you," said the bar-tender. "Gentlemen, the drinks are on the house."

### **A Soul Sold to Hell.**

Hardly knowing what he did, John soon had drank several glasses of whiskey. Gone hope, the last opportunity, the little strength to resist. His soul was sold to Hell. Drink and all that it implies of Hell's iniquity had won the victory. John Watson was literally dead. Dead to love, to truth, to manhood. Dead to a mother's prayers, a wife's tears, a father's duty. Now nothing but a miracle could save him. Alas! there is no such thing in the realm of physical and spiritual growth. Everything, organic and inorganic, is subject to law.



Law governs the natural world, law rules no less in the moral world of soul and heart. Habit had destroyed his power of resistance, the present with its betrayal of honor and manhood was linked to a chain of causes, a natural development, self-created, that followed a law of sowing and reaping. The seed of weakness he had planted in his soul, nurtured it by will and design, until the harvest was ready for the reaping.

### **The Seed—the Harvest.**

At home, his mother and wife were happily planning the future. A ray of sunshine had burst through the clouds which once looked so threatening and hopeless, so dark and despairing. Life was beginning, through the magic of hope, to be worth while after all. The home-coming of son and husband in penitence and seeming moral strength had renewed their spirits, given them courage, endued them

with belief that God had answered prayer, seen their distress and now was going to right their wrong.

**Something Less than a Man.**

John's mother appeared younger, care had deepened furrows upon her face and whitened her hair, but now she hummed a song as she assisted her daughter with packing and talked with her of the new life they would all lead, of the happiness and love in store for them and the little ones. She had given John a sum of money from her scanty store to buy, if he thought wise, transportation for them to California. Alas! he was drinking it all away. Once more a drunkard—something less than a man.

**A Dreadful Contrast.**

Surrounded by a number of his "cronies" he was treating them with thoughtless, improvident hand to the poison which was fast

stealing away his brains. Boisterous and profane his language, a dreadful contrast to the chastened joy and hope that filled his wife's and mother's hearts, the devoted victims of his lust for drink, as they awaited his coming.

Alas! the few short hours of sober retrospection and promise which had brightened their humble home were the last they should experience in this life. Already the presage of doom—destruction of hope and happiness hung over them, but they knew it not.

### **The Mark of the Beast.**

Strong drink's power over the lower passions is its terrific menace to human progress, to all that man and woman seeks of happiness, truth and peace. Under its influence men ordinarily peacefully inclined become brutes. It awakens the pent-up instincts suppressed and almost eradicated

by civilization. It pushes back the clock of time in human life thousands of years and brands its victim with the mark of the beast.

John Watson when sober was a very decent, quiet fellow. When drunk he was sensitive to quarrel and literally a dangerous man "in his cups." The fact of his having been to prison rankled in his breast. All his "saloon" friends knew it and once or twice during the day the look of fierce hatred in his eyes when some one had inadvertently mentioned the fact warned them that this was dangerous ground and that he had been "sent down" for almost killing a man made them careful.

### **The Spark—the Flame.**

Drinking steadily nearly all day had brought him to that moment when he did not know what he was doing or saying. Whiskey has prepared a huge "tinder" of

human souls that some seemingly insignificant chance word or action has set into a destroying flame of devilish passion. Murders, adulteries, suicides, thefts, base deceits, ingratiitudes, destruction of little children, of homes, honors, innocent relatives and friends, a vast hell of degradation and shame is the concentrated creation of "strong drink." A tale to wring tears of sorrow from the angels of God, to crucify afresh hourly, daily, the "Son of Man." One more soul was to be added to the great army of the "destroyed," victims of strong drink's hellish warfare against the human race.

### The Quarrel!

The man who met John earlier in the day and had infused into his brain the idea that he was a jail-bird, a hopeless case, once more used that term in some vapid argument that was taking place among them.

With a scream of rage John lurched at him and in an instant they were fighting with savage ferocity. John was stronger than his opponent and was punishing him severely. Several men endeavored to part them; before this could be accomplished they had closed hands upon each other's throats, with intense hatred blazing in their eyes, in a supreme effort to choke each other into submission.

**The Murder!**

Reeling and struggling for the mastery, knocking over chairs and tables in their madness they fought like two wild beasts thirsting for the life-blood. John was slowly overcoming his weaker antagonist, bracing himself with all his remaining strength he hurled his opponent to the floor. With a crash the man's head struck against a brass foot-rest which extended along the front of the bar. He lay there

motionless while John stood over him glowering with hate, waiting for him to arise and continue the combat, but he did not move.

Some one raised the cry, "he has killed him," and there was a mad rush for the doors.

One of the bar-tenders rushed to the fallen man while another called the ambulance and police.

John, now thoroughly aroused to impending danger, shrunk away and dodged up an alley. Something seemed to tell him, You are a murderer, you have killed a man—killed a man. It half-sobered him and made him keenly alive to the disastrous situation.

It was now evening and already dark. That was a chance in his favor. Going into a saloon he washed from his face and hands the marks of combat and arranged his disheveled clothes. His soul torn by conflicting emotion, his heart hardened with a des-

perate bravado, he decided to go home and tell his mother and wife and then go away into hiding. So low had he become that he did not think of their feelings or the anguish he was about to inflict upon them. His one thought now was self. Callous to all the world but his own safety. But twenty-four hours out of jail, with a record against him, he was now facing a terrible predicament. He nerved himself to face those whom he had wronged most, the tender, loving woman who bore him, the devoted wife who called him husband, who was even now waiting with eyes of love to welcome him home.

### **The Brand of Cain.**

He reached home as quickly as he could, entering the house by the back door. His wife was singing in the kitchen, preparing with light heart the evening meal. Turning suddenly she saw him in the doorway.



Something in his face, his appearance, seemed to clutch her heart in an icy grip, to numb her into speechless fear. She knew in a moment he had been drinking, but there was another look in his eyes she had never seen before, the look of the hunted beast fearful of impending capture. He advanced to kiss her, but she stepped away from him in dread. With a cry she fell upon the floor in a swoon. This brought his mother into the room. Immediately the old woman knew that her son had once more fallen into the depths.

She cried, "O John, John, my son, my son, how could you? How could you?"

Together they helped revive Edith. When she was conscious John said, surlily: "I am going away forever and have come to say good-bye. I am not going to trouble you any more with my presence. It's no use. I can't help drinking. When I get some money I will send it to you. Where

are the kids? I want to kiss them for the last time. I'm in a hurry. Give me a bite to eat."

With protestations, mother and daughter reproached him—told him it was not too late.

Edith said, "O fool that I was to let you go down town alone. I should have known you were not strong enough to resist. John, it is not too late, it is not too late."

"It is," said John, "too late. I'm going, good-bye."

With a cry his wife clung about his neck imploring him to stay. She said, "It is all my fault, John. I should have helped you differently. I was thoughtless. If you had not gone down town you would have been all right. O stay; please, stay; don't go away. O mother, make him stay."

Then his mother pleaded with him, begged him to try once more.

Said she, "It is never too late, John.

Edith and I love you—we will stand by you, help you. Don't go. I am getting old. I shall not be with you much longer—only a little while. Help me to die happy. Be a man, my boy. The son I once knew who was—yes, dear, who still is my hope and pride.”

**God Loves, Like a Mother, Unto the Uttermost.**

John could not bear his mother's tears. Debased man that he was, there was still one tender spot in his soul. No man can sink too low for salvation. God loves like a mother unto the uttermost.

“Mother,” said John, “I cannot stay; there is a reason why I must go away. I must go—now, at once. I will write you all about it. Good-bye.”

Let us now return to the saloon where the victim of John's assault is lying upon the floor. The ambulance and police quick-

ly arrived. The surgeon as soon as he looked at the man said, "This is a case for the morgue, not the hospital." Yes, John had killed the man. It appeared that the victim's skull had been smashed in by the fall and a piece of bone had penetrated the brain, causing almost instant death. The police gathered together the necessary information and then began their search for John. A man was detailed to go to his home. Ah, trusting, hoping, faithful mother and wife, your cup of bitterness and sorrow was not yet filled!

### **The Cup of Sorrow.**

Seeing that John was determined to go away, half-fearful of some underlying cause, his mother and wife prepared him his supper, and he was eating it when a knock was heard upon the door. That a man who had recently, within a couple of hours at least killed another, could sit down

to eat is in itself evidence enough of the indifference mixed with the fear that had reduced him to this paradoxical extremity. His wife opened the door and was met there by an officer of the law. In a moment she knew something was wrong. Her face blanched with the fear that gripped her heart.

### The Arrest.

"Is John Watson here?" said the policeman. "No, yes—that is to say he lives here." "Then I must search this house."

In a moment the man was inside the door and before she could give John warning was confronting her husband, who stood up, pale as death, while the officer asked him his name.

John's mother now came into the room. The sight of the officer wrung from her lips a cry of anguish. Pulling herself together

she called upon her son, "O John, John, what is it? What have you done?"

With brutal frankness the policeman said: "John Watson, I have a warrant for your arrest upon the charge of murder. You had better come along quietly." Then he hand-cuffed his prisoner and led him out of the house to prison.

John could not look in the faces of his mother and wife; the last he heard was a piercing cry as the door of his home closed upon him forever.

How can we analyze the distress, the awful misery and sorrow which had fallen upon the two innocent sufferers of his guilt? In a distant part of the city a broken-hearted woman was moaning over the body of her dead husband. Here a mother and wife were bowed with grief, with unutterable anguish over the deed which had branded upon the brow of son and husband the awful mark of Cain. The

word murder whispered and cried its dire import from every recess of their souls. They could not speak to each other, only look and sway in throes of woe and moan with tearless eyes. The last half an hour seemed an eternity wherein they had wandered in utter darkness, where no ray of light could ever penetrate and only wails of lost souls were heard to break the awful silence. Life now was hopeless. There was no future, because they lived in the dreadful present, which stretched away across the years with its shadow and shame.

### The Awful Silence.

Edith Watson, the wife of a man who had killed another. My husband, she thought and thought—a murderer. Looking at her children, the same dreadful truth—the offspring of a murderer. Oh, it was too great to bear. Why should she have to suffer. God was cruel, life was cruel, bet-

ter death than this. Then she would look into the face of her husband's mother, furrowed with care, white with the pain of a killing grief. Then she would cry afresh and some voice would whisper, "You must be still brave for her sake."

### **The Moral and Eternal Ties of Brotherhood.**

Ah, dear reader, this is the curse of strong drink. We become indifferent because its bane of death and suffering has not touched us or our own loved ones. We read in the columns of the press its daily record of crime and ruin, its bloody scourge of shame and sorrow and our interest becomes accustomed to this terrific ravage among the children of men while our apathy grows into shameless indifference. Yet we are all bound by invisible, yet nevertheless moral and eternal ties of brotherhood to every human being in the world.



**A Murderer in More Senses Than One.**

A pall had settled over the little cottage which enshrined this tragedy. The gloom of a hopeless night. Edith Watson had aged ten years since the word "Murder" had impressed its terrific significance upon her soul. Her spirit, her heart was broken. If it had not been for John's mother, her presence and sorrow, which was so great that it made her strong enough to bear her own, she would have sought death. Always unselfish and tender-hearted the sight of the elder woman's grief, her dull despair, the bowed white head with its weight of destroyed faith, of wretchedness and tearless sorrow—this made her, in a measure, superior to the dread calamity which had irrevocably blighted her life, as long as she should live. Then the little children? Her mother heart was torn with conflicting emotions as she looked into their innocent

faces and thanked God that not yet at least could they know or feel the disgrace which clouded their name. She must struggle, must live, must work for their sake. Yes, and for their grandmother's sake, whom they passionately loved. Thus she reasoned her heart distracted with grief, but she did not realize that the continual worry had undermined her health, incapacitating her to bear the sorrow and the burden of working, for her own support.

He did not know it, but John Watson killed the victim of his rage and the innocent victims of his own passion for drink, that fateful day. He was a murderer in more senses than one.

Once more he was a prisoner of the Law awaiting trial. The charge, one which might mean a sentence of death. Already his cruelty had woven the presage of death, through sorrow, broken hearts and ruined lives over the heads of his

mother and wife. He had literally killed them, not deliberately with malice prepense like the man slain in the drunken brawl, but by a more dreadful method, by sorrow, the anguish of shame his actions had inflicted upon them. But he did not know. Some day their tears and heart-aches he would feel and understand how much they had suffered.

### **For the Children's Sake.**

He sent a lawyer to his mother with a plea for help, that he might have defense. All the money she had she willingly pledged that her son might have a chance to escape the gallows. With dread his wife awaited the trial. Once more, she had to stand before the morbid, inquisitive crowd and see her husband in the felon's dock. She prayed for strength, hoping against hope he would escape capital punishment. That was her one fear and she

was willing to help him unto the uttermost for the children's sake.

His mother also declared she too would take the stand in her son's defense—perhaps her tears and love might have some effect to mitigate the punishment.

John's lawyer advised them that this was a wise course, as pity plays a large part, at times, with the jury—all men feel solicitude for suffering women.

### A Presentiment.

Edith was fearful of Mrs. Watson's health. She appeared so strange, so sad. At times her eyes had a far away look in them and once she found her upon her knees crying and calling upon her dead husband, I am coming soon, John—coming soon. There was no doubt in Edith's mind that her one comfort, the mother of her erring husband she had grown to love, was not long for this world.

She felt, at times, that she too was doomed to an early death. A strange uneasiness had taken possession of her. A vague something that seemed a presentiment, a call to go away for ever. She was undoubtedly broken in health, weakly, and on the verge of a general nervous breakdown. The continual strain had been too much for her. The future frightened her. What would become of her children?

Poverty, too, with its terror was now facing them. Oh, what could she do? Alone and friendless she could not see a ray of light. Round about her were the black clouds of despair. God had seemingly hidden His face while the Destroyer Drink had waged and won a victory for the soul of a man—a murderer—her husband, while the Law prepared to mete out punishment for the crime it had indirectly created.

The blood had been wiped away, the

brass rail cleaned and polished, and the feet of men rested upon the spot where a life had been crushed out, while they still drank the poison that had killed a man, broken two hearts, destroyed a soul and made a mockery of life.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Trial For Life.

The jury was impaneled and the hour of trial had come. Mother and wife were in the court room ready when the time should come to do their utmost to save the prisoner from death. The usual throng of morbid sightseers filled the chamber and added a sacrilegious touch to the impressions the two broken hearted women felt as they waited for this momentous issue to work its solemn course unto the end. John's lawyer had decided it wise to bring the prisoner's little children into court in expectation that their presence might influence the jury into leniency. The Judge had taken his seat and the prisoner was now being brought in. His face was

pale, drawn and haggard with what he had suffered of sleeplessness and remorse. His mother began to cry when she caught sight of him. He had aged and looked old, so unlike the man who had left their little home a few weeks before to go to prison. Sadly his wife sought his eyes. For one fleeting moment he looked at her then bowed his head and awaited the proceedings to commence.

### **The Trial.**

The charge was made and the witnesses duly sworn, their testimony heard and examined. There was not much to tell. The facts were well authenticated. The court was informed that both men were under the influence of drink. How the victim of the assault had called John a gaol-bird, of his retaliation, the fight, the fall which had proven fatal. The officer spoke of his arrest—of the admittance of guilt by the



prisoner. Then the lawyer for the defense pleaded for his client's life, and wound up by calling upon his mother to testify.

### **Unveiling of a Mother's Heart.**

All eyes were turned upon the bowed, white haired woman who stood there, the mother of a man being tried for his life. Even the prosecuting attorney felt sorry for her as she simply told the history of his fall. She went over the details of his life, what a good boy he was, how loving and obedient. Then she told of the first glass, how long ago he had commenced the downward career which had enmeshed him in ruin. Many times she broke down and there were very few dry eyes, even the judge was affected. Her mother's heart was broken, every one could see that. She seemed to be endowed with a strange, almost supernatural, strength. Lifting her voice she cursed drink, made a frantic appeal for its destruction, and then

exhausted, she cried, Oh, Judge, you are going to panish my boy for a crime that was thrust upon him. Drink did it, drink did it. So I pray for mercy, mercy, mercy. Her strength failing her, she fainted and had to be carried to an ante-room.

Then John's wife was placed upon the stand. She corroborated all that had been said. She told the court that previous to the dreadful habit of drunkenness John had been a model husband and attributed his position to an inherent weakness for strong drink. This pale, thin young woman, standing there with her two children, was a pitiful object. In her, seemed epitomized the seemingly cruel law that the innocent must suffer as well as the guilty.

### **The Sins of the Father Visited Upon the Children.**

Her simple testimony touched the hearts of all, but the law must be vindicated. In

impassioned oratory the prosecutor painted the other side of the picture and pointing to the victim's widow said: There is a woman who also suffered, a bereaved wife with fatherless children through this man's brutal instinct to kill. We will not weary the reader with this aftermath of the law's process. Already, judgment has been formed as to cause and effect.

### **The Sentence.**

Then the Judge summed up the case to the jury. It did not take them long to reach a verdict. Before pronouncing sentence he pointed out to the prisoner the magnitude of his crime. He told him that his actions had ruined other lives besides his own, hurrying one into eternity—that he had cast a blight upon his family and a blot upon his wife and children's name. You are now facing, said he, the punishment for your crime against yourself,

your fellow man and society. A verdict of manslaughter has been found against you and I herewith sentence you to the states prison for fifteen years with hard labor.

We draw a veil over the anguish then endured by John's wife and mother. He was allowed to say good-bye to them before taken back to his cell. The prematurely old and broken hearted mother flung her arms around his neck and hysterically sobbed in grief that touched the souls of those there, accustomed as they were to such scenes.

She said, Oh, John, you have broken my heart. I shall never see you again. There is nothing more left for me to live for. Thank God your father did not live to see this day. Oh, my boy, my boy. That my love and prayers should come to this—my son. Oh, I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!

**Farewell!**

Meanwhile John hung his head in shame. The tears streaming down his cheeks as he stroked the white head of his grief-stricken mother. Forgive me, mother. Forgive me. I cannot bear it unless you do. Oh, forgive me. And you, my wife. O God, what a fool I've been—forgive me—you must. I feel I shall never see you again in this life. It was not I that did it. It was whiskey—cursed whiskey. I did not mean to kill him. He called me a gaol-bird—and I became possessed of a thousand devils. Forgive me. Then he lifted with his handcuffed hands his little children and kissed them passionately, while they began to cry, catching the idea in their little minds that something was wrong.

The officers then told him time was up. Crying, moaning, the two women tearfully

said good-bye, both saying, I forgive you. Edith was in a half dazed condition and as her husband was led away down the dark stairs to his cell, she gave a piercing scream and fell in a deathly swoon. Thus one chapter in a man's life closed—the other was to be written upon his heart through long and weary years in letters of fire forged by remorse and molten tears of shame.

### Hopeless!

When Edith and her husband's mother reached home that night despair had begun its deadly work within their hearts. Life had become a living death. Poor, alone, seemingly helpless, the future simply did not exist for them. They were already dead, dead to hope, dead to happiness, dead to all things but the fearful pain in their bosoms and the awful memory of the past haunting their minds. In

an agony of blind grief they sat for hours far into the night, alone in the dark with no sound breaking the silence but their dry choking sobs, until both fell asleep as they sat, to awake again to a realization of that day's tragedy of horror and bitter travail of soul.

A kind neighbor took the children for a time until some provision could be made for them. Days passed away and Edith braced herself to make some effort that should bring in a little income for their simple needs. Destitution was staring them in the face. Broken in health, she could hardly move around the little house they called home.

### Poverty.

Now another calamity impended. John's mother was taken sick, so ill that the doctor despaired of her life. This involved extra work and created another worry. The

children had been sent to a home because their mother was too poor and fragile to properly care for them. She missed them terribly but her heart had become enured to sorrow. She at least must bear up and do her best to meet the burden which sickness involved that now was thrust upon her. They were so poor that piece by piece the furniture was sold to pay the rent and provide the bare necessities of life. Mrs. Watson could not live much longer. Her son's crime and imprisonment seemed to crush her body with its weight of woe. She daily prayed for death. Edith had remonstrated with her for doing this.

### Despair.

She said, mother what shall I do without you? I need you. You must stay. I can find work. I have not forgotten my business aptitude. God will provide a way.



No, no, God has refused to hear my prayers; my husband is waiting for me, my boy is ruined. I do not want to stay.

Then Edith would argue with her that perhaps it was God's way for some inscrutable purpose and all would be well in the end. In her heart she knew that she would never see her husband again, but she did her best to make the last days of his mother as happy as she knew how.

One evening she went up stairs, as was her custom, with the invalid's supper. She found her smiling—a look of joy was upon her face. It was the first time she had seen her happy for many, many days.

### **A Prophecy.**

Why, mother, I believe you are better. You look radiant, said Edith.

Yes, my dear, I am better because I am going home.

Going home! What do you mean?

I have had a dream.

A dream?

Yes.

Tell me about it.

### A Revelation.

I dreamed that I was in heaven with my husband. That you were there and John and the children. Oh, we were all so happy. But John had not made his peace with Him who came to this poor earth to die for those like my boy. Then I dreamed that I took John by the hand and led him up a long and steep flight of steps to where at the top I knew Christ sat enthroned because I could see a crowd of angels gathered around Him and heard them singing—Oh, such glorious songs that the music entranced me with its wonderful beauty and melody. Slowly we climbed, hand in hand, until near the top. Then the crowd of angels parted and I could

see the Lord upon His throne. He saw me and John too and beckoned us to approach. Oh, Edith, what a face I saw. There seemed expressed all my love, all my tears, all my prayers. His look pierced my soul and read the secrets of my heart, at the same time giving me courage to speak. Then I said, O Lord, I have brought my boy—the son you gave me. He needs forgiveness and strength; he is sorry, Lord; he did not mean to do it. Forgive him for Thy name's sake. Then the Saviour spoke. His voice was so sweet and low, it seemed as if it were healing balm poured into the wounds of my soul. He said, your mother love has triumphed. Your boy is saved. He is mine. I bought him with my blood. Then I fainted for very joy—and awoke.

Yes, dear, my boy will meet me there. I shall never see him again here—but there I know he shall once more be my

son, the son who loved me, who was good and true until strong drink blighted his soul with sin. I know it, because He, my Lord and God has told me. Now I can die content.

Edith was startled at the look which spread over the invalid's face as she sighed with weakness and closed her eyes. She was very white as if the exertion of the recital was too much for her feeble strength, but there was something about her which frightened her daughter. She seemed ethereal, expectant, even as she lay there motionless as if in sleep.

Mother, said Edith, you must not talk of dying. We will yet be happy and have the children with us. Who knows but that the sorrow of our lives is only a trial that we may know what joy is when—when John comes home. Edith had not mentioned his name since the fateful day of the trial, now all the dreadful past burst

upon her memory as one long sharp pain and she commenced to cry bitterly.

Mrs. Watson said, do not cry, my daughter; all is well. God has told me so. I have thanked Him for you, prayed for you. You have been my one solace in the dark days that have just passed away for ever. You must still be brave, still faithful, still trusting in your Heavenly Father's love; yes, for your children's sake. I am not long for this world. I know it; so, dear, do not trouble when the time comes. I shall wait there for you and John, and God will watch over your little ones, every human life is in His care.

Oh, yes, mother, I know and try to believe, but I seem to have been singled out for more than my share of sorrow and suffering and at times I feel rebellious at what seems like injustice and positive cruelty. I want to die, too. Oh, if it were

not for the children I believe I should end it all.

Edith, dear, you must not talk like that—the ways of God are past finding out, sometimes His hand lies heavily upon us but it is a hand of love.

### **Danger!**

After making the sick woman comfortable for the night Edith Watson sat in the almost bare little sitting room thinking, thinking, worrying, trying to reconcile the dreadful past with what her mother said—God's love. Life now had reached its apex, as far as she was concerned, of hopelessness. It had been devoid of love—what was there now to live for? She was herself ill, which had a depressing effect upon any ambition she might have felt for her children's sake. The only friend she had in the world dying. Her husband in

prison. Her children taken away by stress of cruel circumstances. Grim poverty staring her in the face, all seemed hopeless, dark, impenetrable. She had done her duty, of that she was confident, no one could accuse her of being untrue to the name of wife and mother. She had lived through an awful tragedy that had bowed her soul into the dust and ashes of despair. There was one way out of her sorrow, one path to rest—the grave. The thought haunted her, took possession of her mind and heart—that in her own hand she held release from all trouble, from the past and the unknown future as far as this life was concerned.

Hour after hour sped away and still she sat there in the quiet house, alone in the dark, arguing the fact, dallying with it, weighing in her mind its right and wrong. It was so easy, how could she be blamed? Death meant peace, forgetfulness. It was

the quiet, restful path her weary feet had been seeking. Why had she not ended her trouble before? Then in one decisive moment she whispered unto herself, Yes, I will die, I will die! Her determination, half frightened her; it repelled and attracted. Then she thought of the sick woman up stairs. She could not die while John's mother lived. It would kill her, it would be cruel and selfish. Once she thought she heard her call her and half rose to go up stairs. Listening she heard no sound but the beating of her own heart. Thus she watched the night's hours away with the secret in her bosom—her resolve to die. Oh, it became a precious thought, it made her light-hearted, almost gay. She felt like she did on the morning of her marriage—strangely excited and happy. The dawn of day had no terrors now. She did not care. The world with its sorrow was a place she was soon going



to bid farewell for ever. She wept tears of joy. Now she would go and see mother.

Daylight had come. All the long hours of the night Edith had sat thinking and resolving this last tragedy of her life. Evidently the suffering of the past had weakened her mind. Even her mother love seemed lost in this morbid desire for death. She forgot her children, all save the one impulse which framed itself in words upon her brain: "I am going to die, to die, to die." She made up her mind to wait until the sweet, broken-hearted comrade of her sorrow passed away, before taking the fatal step. She could not leave John's mother alone in the world. Ethel, her sister-in-law, was so disgraced by her brother's trial that she had moved to another city—so she alone was left to care for this stricken woman. Yes, she must wait for her husband's mother's sake.

With a peculiar feeling of happiness,

Edith Watson busied herself in preparing a dainty breakfast for the sick woman upstairs. The few dollars they possessed should be spent to give at least a little comfort to John's mother. Edith loved her passionately and would suffer any hardship herself to give her one moment's happiness. Having finished her task of love she crept up stairs to the sick chamber. A strange quiet seemed to pervade the room. At first she thought her mother was sleeping, so she crept on tiptoe to the bedside to make sure. Oh, how quiet she seemed. Frightened, Edith took hold of her hand and its coldness startled her.

### **The Hand of Death.**

Mother! Mother! she cried. But the still form did not move. Then she knew in one swift moment that the Angel of Death had touched her and called her Home. She was dead.

With a cry Edith flung herself upon the side of the bed in a paroxysm of grief. Dead, dead, another link broken in the slender chain that bound her to life. Another sorrow to bear. The white face upon the pillow with its look of profound peace mocked her. It seemed to say, "At last," "Here is rest." A faint lingering smile hung upon the mouth as if the soul on leaving the body had whispered to the dying heart a word of cheer. Then the loneliness of the house frightened Edith and she ran from the room down stairs. The quiet seemed to surround her with a tangible garment, to envelop her with a great solemnity. It was the first time she had ever touched death, been close enough to experience its mystic influence upon the soul. It fascinated and beckoned her to its cold embrace. She felt that she too was about to discover the secret behind its awful quiet. The time had come

for her to die. A subtle voice whispered it to her numbed brain. Friendless, alone, poor, weak in health, she too would seek the peace that rested so lightly upon the thin white face up stairs. With this dominant resolve in mind and heart she quietly left the house and sought a drug store to purchase the means. It was the first thought that entered her mind. She had not reasoned how she would die. It did not matter much. So she bought with cunning the poison and returned home, the little vial clasped in her hand as her most precious possession. It was the key to unlock the door which she thought led to peace and rest. Besides, she was so tired. Oh, so tired!

**Tired! Oh, so Tired!**

Dear reader, we will draw a veil over the last act in this our tragedy. Days after, the bodies of these two were discovered.

Strong drink had finished its deadly work. The place once called home now a charnel house of death! The Destroyer had reached out his strong hand, merciless and devilishly cruel and plucked the fruit from the seed sown in one man's heart—even his mother's life, his wife's life—and the happiness of little children. Like a pestilence which comes unseen, in the dark, the curse of whiskey had fallen upon this man with deadly intent. It had destroyed the innocent as well as the guilty. Polluted love with infamy, honor with disgrace, trust with shame—given a stone for bread and death for life. Verily, it is the supreme curse of the human race.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Remorse—Despair.

But what of John Watson? What of him who daily faced the dull routine of prescribed life with heart for ever burning in Hell's flames of remorse and shame? What of the man who had sold his birth-right for poison which was now causing him unceasing anguish? What of him?

### Voices of the Past.

He was now in dire misery. Haunted by the ghosts of what might have been. A man still young shut off from freedom, doomed to spend the best years of his life a prisoner, surrounded by criminals of all types, his character gone, his name a by-word and a hissing. The stain of murder upon his soul, his hands red with the blood

of a brother man's life. Every day a living eternity of woe. Every night filled with voices, the voices of the past, accusing, mocking, defying. The darkness bringing the faces of those whom he had wronged. His mother's with a look of unutterable sadness, his wife's, her eyes burning through him with reproach, his 'little ones' with tears streaming down their cheeks. The sunlight bringing the taunt of deriding freedom. He had sown the wind and was reaping the whirlwind. Occasionally, in blind rage, he would curse himself, his folly, the drink that had caused his downfall. There were times when he felt that if ever he got out of prison alive he would try to kill every saloon keeper he could. Oh, now, how he hated those who sold the poison which had blighted his life. He would think over and over in impotent strength the events of the past, how he fell.

**Memory!**

Memory would bring in awful vividness the steps, each succeeding each, until he stood in the dock on trial for his very life. The first glass, the subsequent growth within him of desire, the destruction of his conscience, the awakening of the brute, the killing of truth, honor, love, within his heart. Now he could blush at that particular night of shame spent in a Brothel when the wife of his bosom was giving birth to his child.

**The Law!**

My God, he would moan, what a devil, what a brute I have been. At times he would lift his manacled hands and pray for death and eagerly search out a way to encompass this end. But he was well watched, fettered except when at the dreary labor. The Law was surely exacting its revenge. Not only the civil law,



but the moral law of mind and heart. The good within him was now rising to the surface accentuating the enormity of his crimes against himself and loved ones. Remorse encircled his soul with utter darkness. He had forgotten that such a thing as hope ever existed. So o'erwhelmed was he with shame and bitterness of spirit no thought of the future ever entered his mind. He lived in one awful moment of agonizing self-condemnation. His mother's cry of anguish rang in his ears, broken by his wife's gentle accents of ruined, blasted love.

### Ghosts.

O God! he would scream. Kill me, blot me out of Thy book of life. Night after night he would moan through the long weary hours a prey to emotions that strong drink had suppressed and apparently destroyed. Memories of truth and honor

which he once prized that had been enshrined with his mother's love as pearls of young manhood and promises of a successful honorable life. He lived in a hideous realm of contrasts. The present with its bane of punishment and a created world of what might, what should, have been. The thought of his wife and children haunted him. What was she doing? Where was she living? Oh, if he could see her for one moment and tell her to be brave, that he would yet make his life worthy of her love. That at least would make the present easier to bear. And his mother, his dear old broken-hearted mother! He pictured her nightly pouring out her soul in prayer for her convict-son. He could see her face in the dim light of the cell as she knelt and prayed for him. Then he too would pray that God would yet give him the privilege of seeing her once more. He doubted as he prayed;

she was broken in health, he had done his best to kill her. Ah, suppose she should die? He could not bear to think of that. Then his father. He remembered that he was drunk the day his father was buried. O God, how low he had sunk!

A revulsion of feeling possessed him against whiskey. He cursed it, he cursed the man who sold it, who made it. It seemed to incarnate a terrific spirit, a mighty power against which he hurled his life in vain. It mocked him, chained him to his cell, taunted him of the past. He knew he was but one victim of a vast army of ruined men the demon power of drink had blasted, crushed into the depths of hell. Two-thirds of the prisoners, and there were several hundred, who like him were being punished for crime, owed their incarceration to Drink. That was the Curse which had built the prison, which had filled it with tortured souls. Some,

like John Watson's, torn with conflicting emotions of rebellion and shame; others, hardened into evil, crystallized into machines of base motive and impulse by the Destroyer—the devil in the poisonous glass.

### **An Ante-chamber to Hell.**

The very atmosphere of the gaol seemed to impinge upon the consciousness evil in manifold invisible forms of suggestive thought. It was as an ante-chamber to Hell. A gathering of souls made in God's image whose very freedom had been lured into licentiousness by the subtle strength of Strong Drink until they were now chained body and soul as minions unto the Power of Evil. They once were men, now they acted and looked like beings belonging to an underworld of misery and woe.

The beauty of human life had been twisted, deformed, made horrible with the

lust of base passions, called into being by whiskey and stamped upon the face by subsequent degradation, and features that once bore the bloom and fresh innocence of childhood now wore the cunning and brutality of the beast.

### **The Responsibility of the State.**

Many of these prisoners, like John, were created by the State, who now punished them for abusing a privilege that hid in its heart a menace to every life who accepted it. Drunkenness was responsible for the filling of that gaol, for the creation of the crimes which those in human personalities were doing penance. Every man there had a mother, most of them had wives, many of them children. We can compute from this true and short history of one of their inmates what that involved of sorrow and shame to the innocent women and their little ones. The world only sees

or hears of the particular offense against its code of Law. God alone knows the suffering, far reaching into countless hearts these particular and aggregate crimes create. Unknown, this day, countless mothers' hearts are breaking, countless homes are being destroyed, countless children orphaned by the power—the curse of Drink!

### **The Curse of Drink.**

Ah! if it were given man to see but one tithe the misery and shame which exists through this vast crime against the race, even in a moderately sized city, he would faint with horror at the sight. The house of death, with John's mother up stairs, the body cold, her heart still and broken; there below his wife, self-destroyed, clutching the vial of poison in her hand, this an emblem, a symbol of the awful curse which will hover over human

lives as long as one drop of its poisoner is distilled, or one saloon door swings inward and outward unto Hell.

### **The News.**

One day some time after his wife and mother's death, the news was brought John in his cell—a letter from his sister, relating the details and upbraiding him as the cause. She bitterly denounced his conduct and ended her letter by saying he was a murderer in more ways than one. John crumpled the accusing missive in his hand, his heart utterly crushed with the weight of this terrible calamity.

### **The Drunkard's Portion.**

A feeling of frightful loneliness numbed him, body and soul. Yes, he was reaping a full measure of the seeds of sorrow he had sown in wild, daring and selfish abandon. Upon his head were heaped the burning

coals of a self-created anguish, upon his soul were graven in imperishable hieroglyphics his deeds of shame, his profligate licentiousness, his unspeakable crimes, while in his heart were open, bleeding wounds which nothing in life could heal and in his mind haunting memories, cries, prayers, voices of the dead—even those that he had murdered. A blind hopelessness took possession of him. It seemed as if he alone of all men lived; round about him was impenetrable darkness, and the sound of his own voice startled him. To all intents and purposes he was cut off for ever from aught save the remorse, the despair which gnawed ceaselessly at every faculty of his soul. Every moment he longed for death, for oblivion.

### **The Past, the Present, and the Future.**

The thought of the weary years that stretched before him intensified his suffer-



ing. In the past he had blasted futurity and laid up as his portion an eternity of sorrow. In every glass of cursed whiskey he had unconsciously pledged himself to mental, moral and spiritual death and drank to the destruction of those who loved him. He had degraded with unspeakable shame the name of husband and father, orphaned his children, blighted their young lives. Ah, the thought of them brought the hot tears of anguish to his eyes. Where were they? What had become of them? Alone in the world, their mother dead, their father a felon. O, God! he could not bear it. Then in impotent, dreadful rage he would beat his hands against the steel walls of his cell and with dreadful imprecations curse God and man. Why should he not be given a chance? Why should whiskey be made and sold to ruin and kill? What right had the Law to imprison him when he was a vic-

tim of the Law's license to those who had manufactured and dispensed the damnable poison which had destroyed his life? What a travesty of justice, what a mockery of righteous Christian principle! Then, in his heart was erected an altar of malice, of undying hate against those who represented the Law. So he lived, hour by hour, day by day, through the weary months and years—a soul wrecked upon the great quicksand of our modern civilization, a life blasted, ruined by whiskey. A fleshed promise of noble manhood, degraded and utterly destroyed.

### **Desolation!**

Dear reader, it is impossible to sound by words the awful depths in which John Watson's soul wandered in darkness and despair. This narrative but feebly portrays the inner working and suffering of his conscience. This true story of his life is but

one page from the mighty record of destruction that Strong Drink has written in tears and blood upon the lives of men—a tale of horror, so terrific in import upon human happiness and progress that every man and woman should pledge themselves to never rest or be content until its stain is wiped off the Book of Life. Upon its devilish altar of passion, lust and degradation.

### **The Great Enemy!**

Drink, by that we mean all intoxicating liquor, has offered up the lives—living souls of a vast army of men, women and little children. It has cast upon the hills, plains and valleys of the earth, a dark piteous mantle of crime and suffering. It has made millions of hearth-stones desolate and created rivers of tears from eyes which looked out upon a devastation worse than death.

The wail of broken hearts, the cries of little children still echo around us. It is time to wage relentless war against the great Destroyer of souls. Every saloon is a menace to life and property, every distillery an envoy of Hell. Every man that makes Strong Drink and sells it is an enemy of his fellow man. He destroys honor, love, happiness, prosperity for gain, he is a partner, an accomplice in nearly every crime that stains the record of men's lives.

### **The Symbol of "the First Glass."**

One drink in a man's body upsets the delicate equilibrium of reason and places him in an abnormal relation to duty and life. All the danger, all the sin, all the menace is in that "One Glass." It is the thin end of the wedge which pushes a man over the precipice into the depths of Hell. It ferments in his brain and heart powers

of evil which take possession of his faculties in fiendish glee. The drunkard, the sot—those miserable wrecks of men who haunt the dives where their appetites can be quickened but never appeased, are the symbols of that —First Glass.

It is a witness to the power of this evil that the sight of Drink's ravages all around us does not quicken our indignation and create resolve in our hearts to eradicate it utterly. We grow careless and indifferent through the very persistency and prevalence of its dominion over men. Familiarity in this instance, instead of breeding disgust, contempt and hatred at Strong Drink's machinations seems to create submission of the moral faculties, as if it were a necessary evil. We have seen men who never touched liquor laugh at the impotent attempts of a drunken man to stand upon his feet. Yet the Kingdom of Heaven was hidden in the darkness within that vandal-

ized human body. Oh, the desecration, the awful crime against the souls of men! That the law should allow a poison to be sold which can stupefy the reasoning faculties—the immortal mind which places man but a little lower than the Angels of God; a poison which can slowly kill the sense of duty until its victim is prey to every bestial passion, thoughtless and irresponsible as an animal; a poison which can break a multitude of human hearts and cast upon a cold world, to vacillating charity, the lives of motherless and fatherless children.

### **The Appeal.**

It is time for reformation, for the voice and heavy hand of the people to denounce and eradicate this evil of evils, this plague of death, this Great Destroyer! Am I my brother's keeper? What relation is John Watson, nay, all the John Watsons, the victims of Strong Drink, to me? It is a per-

sonal question, a question which every man must answer for himself before his God.

**The Personal Question.**

DO YOU KNOW GEORGE MORRISON?

JOHN WATSON IS YOUR BROTHER.









